

Heartcatch Precure

小説

ハートキャッチプリキュア！

新装版

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ハートキャッチプリキュア！  
REBORN





## Chapter 1: The Birth of Cure Moonlight

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That day, Tsukikage Yuri visited the prefectural botanical garden that was located close to the center of Kibōgahana City.

That plot of land was home to 15,000 species of flowers, endangered plants and rare plants that couldn't be seen anywhere else in Japan. All of them lovingly cared for in and around 15 greenhouses of various sizes.

As her father was a botanist and worked at the botanical garden, Yuri had been visiting the garden countless of times since she was young. Under the influence of her father, Tsukikage Hideaki, Yuri became a big lover of flowers, able to both name all the flowers in the garden and state what they represented in the language of flowers.

Today, Yuri did not come to look at the flowers like she always did. She came to seek information regarding her father, who went missing in Paris, from the curator of the garden, Hanasaki Kaoruko.

10 minutes after her arrival, Kaoruko appeared in the dome-shaped greenhouse, having just finished her staff meeting. The dome-shaped greenhouse was known as the Doll House as it had a large plush toy sitting in the center of it. Kaoruko, a small, elderly lady in a white lab coat with wild fluttering hair, approached her with a powerful stride.

“Sorry for the wait, Yuri-chan.”

“Thank you for taking the time to see me despite your busy schedule.”

Out of respect, Yuri lowered her head.

“What are you talking about? I was the one who assigned him to the Great Heart Tree project. Not only do I feel responsible, I'm just as worried as your mother. I want to help the two of you out as much as I can.”

As she spoke, she invited Yuri to sit at the table that was in front of the 2-meter-tall plush toy. Kaoruko then started brewing black tea and updated Yuri on the events that happened after the disappearance of Professor Tsukikage.

A week following the disappearance, a missing persons report was filed to the Paris Police Department via Interpol. A thorough search of all the hotels, motels and other places that Professor Tsukikage was likely to be staying at within the city was conducted but there were no leads. The scope of the search was expanded to the entirety of France but he was nowhere to be

found. The day before, through Interpol, the search was once again expanded using the search networks of various countries around the world.

After pouring the tea, Kaoruko set the teacup in front of Yuri and took a seat herself.

Yuri sat quietly, ignoring the teacup. An obvious expression of disappointment, obvious enough to Kaoruko, took over her face.

The face of a person who would be even more disappointed than herself, her mother, Haruna, appeared in her mind. Hearing the news of her husband's disappearance, her mother was not able to eat or sleep for three whole days out of worry. Her health deteriorated and she had to be hospitalized for 10 days and was just discharged 3 days ago.

- How in the world am I going to break the news to her?

Yuri thought to herself.

"Yuri-chan, your tea's getting cold."

Startled by Kaoruko's voice, Yuri said,

"What am I doing, spacing out like this..."

Forcing a smile, she took the teacup and smelled the tea.

The familiar scent of Darjeeling hit her nostrils. When she was in primary 4, the first tea that she ever drunk was Darjeeling. Around that time, she had started attending cram school. On the days when class ended late, she would always go home together with her father. While waiting for her father, Kaoruko would make her a cup of Darjeeling tea.

After pestering her mother, she began drinking tea regularly. However, because she couldn't get used to the Japanese-made teabags, she stopped drinking tea at home. It was just not as flavorful as the tea that Kaoruko would brew for her.

Since then, drinking tea at the botanical garden was a secret pleasure of hers. She would pout when Kaoruko wasn't around to make her tea, causing her father to ask her,

"Yuri, did something happen at cram school?"

This happened every now and then.

While Yuri was reminiscing,

"Haha, you haven't changed at all,"

said Kaoruko as she chuckled gently, referring to the fact that the pinky finger of Yuri's right hand was slightly extended as she held her teacup.

Yuri looked at her finger and blushed.

“I learnt this by watching you. When I was in primary school and had my first cup of Darjeeling here, I had no idea how to drink it. I mimicked what you did and it kind of became a habit of mine.”

“You learnt this from me?”

Looking at her own hand, she saw that her pinky finger was slightly extended, just like Yuri said.

“Dear me!”

Kaoruko burst out laughing and Yuri laughed along.

“I haven’t laughed this much in ages!”

“Me too... Oh!”

As Kaoruko started to speak, she let out a small gasp.

“What is it?”

“My granddaughter... heh, heh... does this with her pinky too.”

Kaoruko chuckled, looking like she was enjoying herself.

“Your granddaughter? The one who lives in Kamakura?”

“Yes. Her name’s Tsubomi. She’s really a granny’s girl so she’s guaranteed to copy me. I’m sure of it.”

“Oh my!”

At Yuri’s exclamation, both of them burst out laughing again.

Once they finished laughing, Kaoruko stood up to refill the tea.

“Kaoruko-san, I have to make preparations for dinner so I’ll be taking my leave here.”

“Oh, is your mother still unwell?”

“No, she keeps worrying when she’s at home. So she started working again to keep herself busy.”

“I see. Keeping oneself active can be a good distraction.”

“Thank you for the tea. Well then...”

Yuri stood up to take a bow.

“Huh?”

Letting out a small sound, she turned her head towards the big plush toy.

“Is something the matter?”

“No... It just felt like I was being watched.”

“Yuri-chan, you’re cute. Coupe must have taken a liking to you.”

Coupe was the name of the plush toy.

Yuri bashfully took another bow and exited the greenhouse.

Kaoruko giggled mischievously as she watched Yuri leave, bathed in the evening sunlight. Looking at the blank face of Coupe, she said,

“It wasn’t Coupe that was looking at Yuri, but you, Cologne. Am I right?”

Coupe, who was supposed to be a plush toy, blinked in agreement. In fact, Coupe wasn’t a plush toy at all, but a fairy.

The very next moment, a smaller, plush-toy-looking creature appeared from the heart mark on Coupe’s furry belly. His name was Cologne and he was also a fairy. Cologne, who was suspended in mid-air, spoke to Kaoruko.

“Cure Flower! She’s the one.”

One could sense the strength of his will from his unusually sharp pair of eyes.

“What? Wait, hold on a second... Could you please stop calling me Cure Flower? It’s been almost 50 years since I’ve retired from being a Precure,”

said Kaoruko as she laughed bitterly.

“To us fairies, the protectors of the Great Heart Tree, Cure Flower is a legendary Precure that we are greatly indebted to. We aren’t going to start calling you by your real name. Aren’t I right, Coupe-sama?”

Cologne was hoping for Coupe to agree with him, but Coupe remained motionless and expressionless as ever.

“Very well. But don’t go talking and flying in front of any other human but me, you understand?”

“I can’t vouch for the others, but I promise. Anyway, I have chosen that girl to be the next Precure!”

“What was that!?”

Kaoruko’s shock did not go unnoticed.

“From what I could see when I was in Coupe’s belly, she has elegant legs and great reflexes. However, what I was most taken by was her lovely Heart Flower, the White Lily. It was pure and glistening and...”

Before he could finish, Kaoruko interrupted him firmly,

“If you’re thinking of turning Yuri-chan into a Precure, I won’t allow it.”

“Why not?”

“Weren’t you listening? Her father is missing! This is no time for her to become a Precure.”

“I *was* listening. And despite all that, her Heart Flower hasn’t withered in the slightest. What emotional strength. It was like she was born to be a Precure,”

said Cologne as his eyes sparkled.

For a moment, Kaoruko looked like she was impressed. She immediately regained her composure and repeated herself with an even stricter tone of voice,

“I forbid it! Find someone else!”

Cologne was unfazed.

“Cure Flower! The Great Heart Tree is in danger now that the Desert Apostles have begun to move again. It has instructed me to find girls who could become Precure with great haste. Cure Flower, you’ve begun to feel it, haven’t you?”

he lashed out at Kaoruko.

“...”

Kaoruko couldn’t respond. Cologne was right. About a month ago, the pendant on her chest began to emit a dull glow - the same pendant that sealed away Dune’s, the leader of the Desert Apostles, power.

Using her pendant, she sensed Dune and the Desert Apostles approaching Earth and ordered Coupe to erect a barrier over the entire botanical garden.

Having made the first move, the chances that Dune would come to the botanical garden in search of his lost powers were almost zero.

Her pendant hadn't glowed since, even when Kaoruko went outside the barrier. Because of that, she assumed that Dune had given up on the Earth and had almost let her guard down.

Yet, Cologne appeared in front of Coupe and herself, informing them that he was sent by the Great Heart Tree to give birth to new Precures who would stand up to the Desert Apostles.

- Had Dune not given up on taking over the Earth?

Kaoruko wondered to herself, but couldn't find an answer.

While she had the help of Coupe, Kaoruko had to face the Desert Apostles by herself in grand battle. Having gone through that experience, she felt that it was all too cruel to force such a fate upon Yuri. As she was now, it was impossible for Yuri to face the Desert Apostles.

After a long silence, Kaoruko looked Cologne in the eye and repeated herself,

"I'm sure there is another girl who is fit to be a Precure. Find her."

Her voice was calmer than before, but left no room for opposition.

"...very well. I will search elsewhere."

With that, Cologne vanished, leaving the greenhouse.

As they matured, the fairies who protected the Great Heart Tree gained various powers and abilities. Fairies who were in their final form like Coupe could sense when their partner Precures were in danger, take on human forms to come to their aid, erect barriers and teleport. Fairies of Cologne's level could only fly and turn invisible.

After sensing that Cologne was no longer around, Kaoruko asked Coupe,

"Does Yuri-chan really have what it takes to become a Precure?"

Coupe didn't respond and instead directed his gaze towards the ceiling of the greenhouse, staring blankly at the darkening sky.

Thinking that Coupe shared her sentiments, she turned her back towards the greenhouse.



The veil of darkness had completely descended. Sounds made by a kitchen knife rang from one of the lit apartments at the botanical garden employee housing block.

Tsukikage Yuri was chopping spring onions. They were for the miso soup that she was preparing as part of the dinner for her mother, who was about to arrive home from work. One thing was on her mind.

She had to tell her mother what she learnt from Kaoruko. She could already see the disappointment that surpassed even her own. She mustn't worsen her mother's condition, not when she just started thinking positively and working again. She must find a way to give her mother hope.

...is what Yuri was thinking to herself.

Haruna, who was a housewife, began working at a shop in the Kibōgahana Station about a year before Yuri enrolled at Myōdōin Academy Middle School.

While it was just middle school, the fees for a private school were nothing to scoff at. They were barely able to scrape through on her father's civil servant salary. To help her family out, Haruna started working herself.

Yuri was fine with attending a public middle school, but her primary 6 homeroom teacher noticed her exceptional grades and suggested applying to Myōdōin Academy. Thinking for her daughter's future, Haruna agreed.

There were days when Yuri had to stop by the deli when club activities ran late. However, she was skilled enough to whip something up herself in a very short amount of time.

Yuri took a great deal of pride in making food that made her parents smack their lips.

Her father, a bookworm, could only use the word "delicious" to describe her cooking. Her mother would give detailed feedback and was instrumental in the improvement of her skills.

As she had stopped by the botanical garden earlier that day, Yuri didn't have time to prepare anything complicated. At least she could make her mother's favorite stew and miso soup.

- All that's left is to find a way prevent mother from losing hope.

Yuri continued pondering as she cooked. Just when she came up with an idea, she heard her mother's footsteps coming from the stairwell.

She added the spring onions and tofu into the pot, letting it simmer for awhile before turning off the gas. She then set the table for three, portioning out the boiled potatoes, salad and sashimi. She has bought the sashimi from the supermarket on the way back from the botanical garden.

Haruna entered the room without saying a word.

“How did it go?”

“I’ll fill you in, go get changed and wash your hands.”

“Right, right. I’m beginning to wonder who the mother is here.”

She forced a laugh and left the kitchen, making her way to the master bedroom.

Yuri was relieved to see that her mother’s mood had improved after returning from work and scooped out the rice and miso soup.

Having changed into her home gown, Haruna returned. She sat down and enquired about the missing Hideaki.

As calmly as possible, Yuri relayed all the information she received from Kaoruko. Just as expected, Haruna’s expression clouded over.

“I see...”

She then hung her head.

“Mother, don’t be like that. After all, no news is good news, right? Father could have found the Great Heart Tree and is now obsessed with his research.”

Haruna continued to look downwards.

Yuri realized that she was just saying that to console her mother as, before his disappearance, her father would call back at least twice a week. She let out a sigh and said,

“Mother, the miso soup is getting cold. Let’s eat.”

Haruna lifted her head and took hold of the chopsticks.

“Oh?”

She finally realized that there was enough food for three.

“I made extra in case father came home.”

Yuri waited for her mother’s reaction.

Looking like she was deep in thought for a while, Haruna finally opened her mouth to speak.

“Thank you Yuri-chan. Your father would be happy to see that.”

They put their hands together before proceeding to eat. Then,

“Yuri-chan, what if he doesn’t come back tonight? What are you going to do with the food?”

“We can cook the sashimi and have it for tomorrow’s lunch.”

“That’s just like you.”

This was the first time Haruna laughed in earnest since Hideaki’s disappearance. Yuri was delighted and suddenly felt more talkative than usual. She started talking about her club activities.

When she was in primary school, she was already physically gifted and was always chosen to take part in the relay race every sports festival.

In middle school, she had a growth spurt and was scouted by the volleyball and basketball clubs. Turning them down due to her distaste for group sports, she settled on the track and field club as she could practice by herself.

It was not that she was shy around others. It was just that she took joy in practicing by herself, free from distraction, honing her craft and improving her endurance and fortitude.

Her efforts paid off. By her second year of middle school, she had won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the city’s 100 meter dash and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the prefectural 100 meter dash. She was qualified to represent the prefecture in the upcoming nationals that fall.

Haruna was delighted to hear the news from her daughter.

“If the competition’s on a Sunday, I’ll come cheer you on! I’ll splurge on the lunch too, so be sure to look forward to it!”

“I’m kind of under a ton of pressure.”

Contrary to her words, Yuri looked completely at ease.

That moment, Haruna glanced at the hallway.

“What is it?”

Yuri asked and her mother responded unsurely,

“Just now, it felt like there was someone at the door...”

“What!?”

They looked at each other and stood up at the same time.

“There’s no one in the hall...”

said Haruna as she let out a sigh.

Without saying a word, Yuri opened the front door and looked down both sides of the corridor. There was no one to be found.

“Mother, don’t say things like that. You’re getting our hopes up for nothing,”

said Yuri to her mother as she closed the door.

“I’m sorry, Yuri-chan.”

Haruna backed away and apologized.

“It’s nothing to apologize for. About tomorrow’s lunch, it looks like we’ll be cooking the sashimi after all,”

said Yuri with a gentle smile and her mother’s facial expression softened.

After dinner, mother and daughter did the dishwashing together.

While Haruna was in the bath, Yuri took the time to prepare for the next day’s English class in her room.

The school that she went to, Myōdōin Academy, was an integrated school – having both a middle and high school. It was a high performing school that attracted top students from all over the prefecture. Yet, Yuri always came in first in her level.

Most top students, to prepare themselves for the university entrance exams, would attend cram schools or prep schools. Yuri was able to maintain her grades just by revising and paying attention in class. She would actively seek the help of her teachers to clarify hard-to-understand topics. Not only that, because of her love for reading, she was always absorbing knowledge that was beyond her curriculum.

“Yuri-chan, the bath’s free!”

Hearing her mother’s voice, Yuri put away her notes and textbooks.

“I’ll be right there!”

She made her way towards the bathroom.

Before entering the bathtub, she took her time to carefully shampoo her long hair.

Yuri felt the stress that she was under because of her missing father melt away in the bath and started to doze off. She suddenly woke up when she felt like she was being watched from the other side of the bathroom door.

“Who’s there?”

Yuri sprang up from the bath and slid the bathroom door open but there was no one there.

“Yuri-chan, is something wrong?”

came the voice of her mother from the living room.

“No, it’s nothing.”

She returned to the bathtub to continue her soak. Exiting the bathroom, she wrapped a towel around herself and dried her hair with the hairdryer.

A horrible thought crossed her mind when she realized that the presence was similar to the one she felt at the greenhouse.

- I’ve read about the dead returning as ghosts and possessing those who were close to them in life...

Yuri then shook her head and reassured herself.

“What am I saying... There’s no such things as ghosts.”

With that said, she tapped herself on the head and continued to dry her hair.



Still, Yuri couldn't shake the feeling of being watched even when she was in class or running on the track. She was always checking her surroundings but couldn't catch anyone watching her.

- What is wrong with me?

At a loss, she sought advice from her friend, Kurumi Momoka, while having lunch together.

"I'm sure it's just a boy who has a crush on you,"

said Momoka with a smile devoid of worry.

Yuri denied that possibility, but Momoka went on.

"You know, you might not be aware of this, but you'd be really cute if you took off those specs. You should switch to contacts."

The fact that it was coming from Momoka, a model for a teen fashion magazine, made Yuri frown for a second. She then forced a smile.

"I don't think so."

Momoka snatched away Yuri's glasses before miming a camera with her index fingers and thumbs, looking at Yuri through it.

"I'm absolutely certain! Wanna be in a magazine with me next time?"

"Please stop teasing me."

said Yuri, getting a little upset. She took her glasses back from Momoka and put them on.

"Aw, what a shame. You'd be so popular."

"It was foolish of me to come to you for advice."

Yuri returned the lid to her lunch box, got up from the bench and headed back to the school building.

"Wait for me, Yuri~."

Momoka ran after her in a panic.

Momoka was raised in a family with a professional cameraman for a father and a model-turned-fashion designer for a mother who opened her own shop. When she was young, she was an amateur model and had since gone professional. Her beauty and style isolated her as she was deemed unobtainable by the boys and envied by the girls.

Yuri also experienced a similar isolation because of her outstanding grades and was always by herself.

In the second year of middle school, they found themselves in the same class. While their personalities were like oil and water, they naturally became friends as they were both always alone.

On days when she had to skip class for gravure shoots, Momoka would borrow the notes that Yuri took in class.

When they went out shopping for clothes, she would always surprise Yuri with style combinations that Yuri would have never thought of herself.

Yuri felt the most relaxed around Momoka.

Yet, even while chatting with Momoka, she never shook the feeling of being watched.

It was not until a week after Yuri visited the botanical garden did she finally uncover the culprit.

Yuri was in her room revising for the next day's classes. Just like before, she felt someone watching her and looked over her shoulder. Suddenly, a plush toy-looking creature that she had never seen before appeared in front of her.

"Who!? Are you?"

"I apologize for startling you. My name is Cologne. I have been observing you for the past week."

"So, the one who was watching me... was you?"

Cologne nodded and Yuri narrowed her eyes.

"So you were the one who was peaking at me from outside the bathroom."

At that remark, Cologne's face turned red and he burst out angrily,

"How impertinent! My appearances aside, I am a gentleman. While it's true I was outside the bathroom, I did not see you naked."

Cologne was so upset that, instead of being surprised, Yuri started laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha... Alright, I'll believe you."

The anger disappeared from his face and he floated gently towards Yuri, landing on her desk.

"Tsukikage Yuri, I have a request."

"Already? But this is our first meeting."

"From your perspective, this *is* our first meeting. But I have been observing you for a week. You're smart and you take everything you do seriously. Would you do me the honor of becoming a Precure?"

"Precure?"

"Emissaries of justice who protect the Earth from the Desert Apostles. The Desert Apostles plan to turn the Earth into a desert and wither the Heart Flowers of those who live on it."

Yuri had no idea what Cologne was going on about.

"Just what are these Desert Apostles and Heart Flowers?"

"Indeed, normal humans might not be able to comprehend what I'm saying. Right. I'll start from the top. The Desert Apostles are said to be a nomadic race from a planet beyond the galaxy.

Having reached the end of its lifespan, their planet died out. They now wander the stars in search of planets to call their new home, turning them into deserts – their preferred environment. Possessing advanced technology, they exhaust the planet's resources and move on to the next world."

"They're basically aliens?"

It sounded like something straight out of a science fiction novel. But Yuri decided to hear Cologne out, seeing how serious he was.

"Having turned multiple planets into deserts, the Desert Apostles finally set their sights on Earth 400 years ago."

"400 years ago? That's right after the beginning of the Edo period."

"You're sharp as always. Sensing the danger, the Great Heart Tree gave birth to fairies like me. We bestow the Seeds of the Precure that allow girls to turn into Precure to protect the Earth from the Desert Apostles."

"Hold it. Did you say Great Heart Tree?"

"Right. That's the tree your father and the others were searching for. The Great Heart Tree is the source of all life on Earth and there's only one of it in existence. Every human being is in possession of a Heart Flower within them and if they all wither, the Great Heart Tree dies."

"Do I have one of those Heart Flowers too?"

"Of course. Yours is the lovely White Lily."

"So you can see my Heart Flower?"

"Indeed. And the White Lily in the language of flowers is..."

"Purity and grace."

"A fitting Heart Flower for you, don't you think?"

Yuri remained silent for a while and collected her thoughts.

During that silence, Cologne was worried that Yuri wouldn't believe him and would refuse to become a Precure.

However, Yuri proved him wrong. Looking Cologne in the eye, she said,

"I understand. All I have to do is become one of these Precures and protect the Heart Flowers of the people and, in doing so, protect the Great Heart Tree?"

Cologne felt relieved after hearing those words.

“Precisely. Nothing less from the girl I set my eyes on.”

“Don’t celebrate just yet.”

Yuri pushed up her falling spectacles.

“Let’s say I do become a Precure. Will I be able to meet the Great Heart Tree?”

“That’s... a possibility. The Great Heart Tree is always changing its location to hide itself from evil people and beings from other worlds. Even I, a fairy born from the Tree, cannot pinpoint its location. But if do become a Precure and develop your powers, the Great Heart Tree will eventually appear before you.”

“Then I shall become a Precure. I might be able to run into my father... Am I right?”

“I’m sorry... That is something that I cannot promise you.”

Yuri let out a small laugh at the sight of Cologne’s face that was filled with regret.

“Did I say something funny?”

“That’s not it. In situations like these, shouldn’t you have lied and said that I would be able to meet my father?”

“That’s... well...”

“My, aren’t you an honest one. I like you. So will you be the one to turn me into a Precure?”

“I would very much like to do that right this instant. But there is someone who’s against it. Cure Flower.”

“Cure Flower?”

“The Precure who protected this planet 50 years ago by fending off all the Desert Apostles’ attacks and defeating the strongest of them all, Dune.”

“That’s not in any of my textbooks.”

“I wouldn’t expect it to be. She *was* fighting the Desert Apostles. They tend to avoid the public eye. Not to mention, Cure Flower’s power earned her the title of strongest Precure in history. She defeated most of her foes before anyone noticed.”

“My parents weren’t even born 50 years ago,”

whispered Yuri to herself as Cologne let out a grin.



“Oh, but Cure Flower is still alive and well. In fact, she’s someone you know very well.”

“Someone I know?”

Yuri was visibly shocked.

“The curator of the Kibōgahana Botanical Garden, Hanasaki Kaoruko.”

“Kaoruko-san...!?”

Yuri let out a big gasp.

Hanasaki Kaoruko was in the Doll House sipping Darjeeling tea and talking to Coupe.

“It’s been a week. Just where on Earth has Cologne gone to?”

“...”

Just like always, Coupe simply stood, staring blankly into the distance.

“I know I said that there were other girls fit to become Precure... Perhaps they weren’t as easy to find as I thought.”

Kaoruko cleared her throat and Cologne suddenly appeared right in front of her.

“Cure Flower, I’ve found one!”

“C, Cologne!? Is that true?”

“Of course. Come on in!”

yelled Cologne in the direction of the entrance. The door opened and Tsukikage Yuri threaded her way in.

“Yuri-chan!?”

Kaoruko gasped and turned to glare at Cologne.

“What is the meaning of this? Didn’t you spend the week searching for another suitable Precure candidate?”

“There is no one more suitable than Yuri. I have spent the week carefully observing her. I have no doubt.”

“Cologne...!”

Before she could continue, Yuri interrupted her.

“Kaoruko-san, I’ve heard everything from Cologne. If I become a Precure and protect the Great Heart Tree, I might be able to meet my father. Please, let me become a Precure!”

Kaoruko let out a sigh. Her expression became firm and she started to lecture Yuri,

“Yuri-chan, it is dangerous to become a Precure half-heartedly. You might even lose your life.”

“I am fully aware of the consequences. However, I want to protect the Great Heart Tree from the Desert Apostles, just like you did as Cure Flower! Please let me become a Precure!”

Yuri stared at Kaoruko with an unwavering gaze. Her determination was as clear as day.

- This girl is serious.

But if she allowed Yuri to become a Precure, Yuri would have to face the Desert Apostles in grueling battle and maybe even lose her life. That is the one thing she would not do – cause Yuri's mother even more sadness. That is when she offered a proposal.

"I can see that you're serious about becoming a Precure. But you will have to learn how to fight. I will teach you."

"*You* will teach me?"

Yuri appeared calm, but was feeling uneasy on the inside. Kaoruko may be a former Precure, but she was close to being 65. Seeing her fret, Cologne grinned and said,

"Yuri, don't underestimate Cure Flower. Decades ago she defeated all the black belts to become the youngest ever winner of the National Karate Championships."

"I, I see..."

"Not a lot of people know that I used to do karate. Not even your father."

Kaoruko smiled.

In her fight to the death with Dune, leader of the Desert Apostles, she was rendered unable to practice karate anymore. Having no choice but to retire from the sport, she turned to studying botany. She never participated in another karate match since. Still, she was confident enough to teach the basics of karate.

If she trained her harshly, Yuri might just give up on the idea of becoming a Precure. That is what Kaoruko thought to herself.

"If you can survive my training, I'll let you become a Precure,"

said Kaoruko.

Yuri caught a glimpse of the sides of Kaoruko's mouth rising.

The next day, Yuri approached Yabe-sensei, the advisor for the track and field club, to turn in her resignation form.

Yabe was fervently opposed, but Yuri was resolute. He knew Yuri's abilities better than anyone else and tried to convince her to quit after the Nationals the following month. It was to no avail.

When Yuri first joined the club, Yabe felt that she would be a runner capable of representing Japan and offered to train her for not only the 100 meter dash, but the 200 meter dash as well. However, Yuri was only interested in the 100 meter dash and refused.

Despite being a first-year middle school student, Yuri cited the phrase "He who runs after two hares will catch neither", claimed that she wasn't capable enough and wanted to focus on the 100 meter dash.

He still remembered the determination on her face. She could not be persuaded once her mind was made up. That resonated with him and he had since given up on the 200 meter dash.

- She looks just like she did on that day.

Yabe yielded and accepted Yuri's resignation form.

As Yuri was about to leave the staff room, Yabe called out to her and inquired about her reasons for leaving the club.

"Personal reasons,"

Yuri responded with a smile.

"Personal reasons, eh?"

He returned Yuri's smile. He couldn't have imagined the dangerous journey that Yuri was about to embark on.

Yuri proceeded to the botanical garden to inform Kaoruko of her quitting the track and field club.

Kaoruko was taken aback by her decision, but steeled herself and started talking about her karate practice schedule.

She was to practice for an hour before school, for two hours after school and from noon to night on weekends.

Following that schedule, they practiced continuously in the closed-up Doll House, in the space where Coupe stood, wearing their dōgis.

Yuri surpassed all of Kaoruko's expectations.

Forget complaining, Yuri absorbed everything that Kaoruko taught her like a sponge to water.

The katas, or forms, in karate are all based on a series of blocks, punches and kicks. While differing in name depending on the school, the fundamental katas were: Heian, Tekki, Bassai, Kankū, Jion and Enpi.

Yuri mastered all six katas in a mere month.

Next, Kaoruko drilled her in Shōteiuchi, effective in close quarters combat. Generating power from the ground, the user would close in on the target in a flash and strike their vital points with the base of their palm. This technique was perfect for Yuri.

Yuri made it her own in two weeks. Even though Kaoruko was able to block Yuri's punches, the force from her punches knocked the wind out of her on multiple occasions.

- At this rate, I'm going to be the one to give up.

Although she didn't say it, Kaoruko was thoroughly impressed at Yuri's affinity for karate.

After Yuri returned from her shower after practice that day, Kaoruko sat her down in the Doll House to tell her something.

"Yuri-chan, I'm not getting any younger. There is a lot more that I want to teach you but my body just can't keep up. From tomorrow onwards, you'll be continuing your training at the dōjo of Myōdōin School of Martial Arts."

"Myōdōin? That's..."

"Yes, it is the dōjo that the founder of your school, Myōdōin Gentarō, teaches at. We have known each other for a long time, and he has agreed to let you participate in their training sessions."

"..."

Yuri was not about to let her mother shoulder the cost for her lessons and paused. Making a guess as to what was bothering her, Kaoruko went on to say,

"Don't worry about the money. When I said that you were a prodigy capable of surpassing even me, they were willing to take you in on scholarship."

Yuri felt bad for Kaoruko, seeing how much she was doing for her. Kaoruko saw her hesitation and continued,

"The Myōdōin style is based on aikido, not karate. You redirect your opponent's moves using the Ki that is in your body. You will also be able to learn how to throw your opponent."



Knowing how interesting karate was from Kaoruko's lessons, Yuri's body ached. Thinking that if she aimed higher as a martial artist, Kaoruko would permit her to become a Precure, Yuri conceded,

"...I understand. I shall join."

"Oh? That's great."

To be honest, Kaoruko was 99% willing to allow Yuri to become a Precure. But she still had 1% of doubt. Yuri was way too serious. Not that there was anything wrong with that. It was because of her seriousness that she was able to master the basics of karate in such a short time. However, she didn't make time to develop herself mentally. It wasn't something that could be easily explained in words. If karate was an "active" marital art, then aikido, the basis of the Myōdōin style, was a "passive" one. If one were to familiarize themselves with the style, one would naturally be able to develop mentally. That is what Kaoruko thought when she recommended Yuri to study the Myōdōin's style.

However, Yuri did not have a chance to pass through Myōdōin's doors.

The next day, the Desert Apostles finally made their move.

Kaoruko usually ate with the other employees. Feeling like soba, she paid a visit to the nearby soba restaurant.

The restaurant was practically full. While waiting for her order of tempura soba, she watched the news on the television set that was placed on the counter top.

All of a sudden, static filled the screen and the picture changed.

A masked man appeared on screen, sitting on a throne-like chair, in what appeared to be a dimly lit cave. In front of him were two men and a woman.

It was not known if the woman approached the camera or if the camera zoomed in on her face. Her hair was tied up in a chignon and she sported golden clothes. The woman, who looked to be between the ages of 24 and 25, let out a haughty laugh.

“We are the Desert Apostles, you see~. Cure Flower, we know that you're still alive~. You seemed to have hidden your presence, but we've already pinpointed your general location~! Prepare yourself, for we're coming for that pendant of yours~!”

Once again, the screen filled with static and the news came back on as if nothing happened.

“What was that?”

“Someone must have hijacked the signal to play a prank,”

came the voices of a young couple that were sitting together. The other patrons showed zero interest as they leaned forwards to eat their soba.

Only one person in the entire room went white as a sheet. Kaoruko checked her pendant over and over again but it was not showing any signs of response. She turned towards the counter and yelled,

“Something urgent came up! I'll be leaving the money here!”

Kaoruko tossed the money on the counter and made a dash for the exit.

“But your order's ready!”

said the shop staff as he looked around. Kaoruko was already nowhere to be seen.

As Kaoruko was running back to the botanical garden, she pondered the words of the female Desert Apostle.

There was no mistaking the fact that her pendant glowed 3 months ago in response to Dune approaching the Earth. She immediately got Coupe to erect a barrier to hide her location, but Dune must have been able to pinpoint her general whereabouts.

If so, why did Dune not attack?

There was only one possibility. Dune must not have regenerated completely from their battle 50 years ago. After coming to locate the pendant that sealed away his powers, he must have again distanced himself from Earth to plan his retrieval strategy. And part of that strategy must have involved mobilizing those 4 Desert Apostles who hijacked the signal.

50 years ago, Dune sent forth numerous commanders in his bid to turn the planet into a desert. These 4 Desert Apostles must be the new commanders.

Having lost her Precure powers, she had no choice but to rely on the new generation of Precure to put a stop to their plans.

Kaoruko burst into the Doll House and shouted to Coupe,

“The Desert Apostles are on the move! Send a message to Cologne! Get him to bring Yuri-chan here right away!”

Coupe blinked, nodded, closed his eyes and made contact with Cologne telepathically.

15 minutes later, Cologne, with Yuri in tow, came running into the greenhouse.

“I can no longer oppose to you becoming a Precure. Cologne, give Yuri the Heart Perfume.”

“Roger!”

Cologne extended his right hand out to Yuri and a perfume-bottle-like item materialized before her.

The moment she grabbed the Heart Perfume, an intense holy light radiated from its center. The light enveloped her body and her school uniform vanished. It was replaced with a white one-piece dress.

“I knew it! Yuri was a chosen one!”

Cologne was brimming with excitement. Kaoruko nodded and continued,

“Yuri-chan, gently shake the Heart Perfume.”

Doing as she was told, the front face of the Heart Perfume slid open, revealing a round depression.

“Alright! Go, Seed of the Precure!”

A round Seed of the Precure came flying out of the heart mark on Cologne’s chest.

Yuri caught the Seed, set it within the Heart Perfume and shook it again to close it.

“Say ‘Precure, open my heart!’ and spray the perfume on your body. You will then become a Precure.”

Yuri acknowledged Cologne’s words, held up the Heart Perfume and yelled,

“Precure! Open my heart!”

First spraying the perfume on her chest, the white one-piece turned into a silver and indigo costume that resembled a long dress. Split open boldly in the front, it gradually grew longer as it reached a back, train style. Continuing on to her arms, a long, light indigo glove that reached her forearm and a silver and indigo ornamented bracelet appeared on her right and left arms respectively. Spraying the perfume on her legs, white lace-up boots appeared. Finally, she sprayed the perfume on her hair. Her bangs extended to the top-left in the shape of a crescent moon, her hair turned purple and with the materializing of an indigo rose hair accessory, her transformation was complete.

Kaoruko was beaming at Yuri’s gorgeous appearance while Cologne whistled in admiration.

“You must give your Precure-self a name.”

“A name? Cologne and I have already talked this over.”

Yuri made the shape of a flower bud with her hands in front of her left shoulder. As she spread her fingers open, she exclaimed,

“A lone flower, glistening in the moonlight... Cure Moonlight!”

She struck an elegant and graceful pose. That was the moment Cure Moonlight was born.

“Cure Moonlight...! What a lovely name. But, why Moonlight?”

Cure Moonlight blushed.

“I love Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata.”

“That name suits you perfectly. All you need to know now is how to purify a Desertorian.”

Before she could continue,

“Don’t worry, I’ve taught her that too,”

Cologne chimed in and winked.

“Well, that’s Cologne for you. Always prepared.”

Kaoruko gave a wry smile, but was comforted when she saw how close Yuri and Cologne had gotten as partners in such a short period of time.

That moment, Coupe let out a small groan. Following which, Cologne suddenly became serious.

“I can sense the presence of the Desert Apostles! They’re close!”

Kaoruko tensed up and nodded.

“Cure Moonlight, here we go!”

“Right!”

“Everyone, grab hold of Coupe!”

The three of them clung onto Coupe.

In a flash, Coupe disappeared.

The place they arrived at using Coupe's teleportation ability was a car park near the Kibōgahana Station.

Screams could be heard from the station.

Observing the front of the station behind several parked cars, they witnessed the soldiers of the Desert Apostles, Sunakkis, assaulting and chasing pedestrians. Leading them was the woman from the television broadcast.

"Is that all you can do~? Let me, Sasorina, show you how to drive humans to the depths of despair~!"

Looking around, Sasorina caught sight of a trembling, middle-aged lady in the station shop. It was Yuri's mother, Haruna. Sasorina's eyes shone with a bewitching golden sparkle. She was examining Haruna's Heart Flower. It was a bouquet of three Rape Blossoms, but one of the flowers had withered and it was about to snap off at the stalk.

"He, he, he~... I see I've found myself a lady with a beautifully withered Heart Flower~! "

Sasorina thrust both of her hands out towards Haruna.

"Heart Flower, come on out~!"

Beams of light extended from under Haruna's feet. Before she could let out a scream, her body, along with the beams of light, vanished. She was transformed into an upside down crystal octagonal pyramid with a crystal sphere at its tip. The crystal floated over to Sasorina.

Inside the crystal octagonal pyramid was the wilted Heart Flower while inside the crystal sphere was a shrunken-down, unconscious Haruna.

Sasorina broke the crystal spear off and tossed it aside.

"Won't be needing this~."

It rolled on the ground for a little bit before coming to a sudden halt. It rose up in the air and flew towards the car park.

It stopped before Cure Moonlight and Cologne appeared, holding the sphere.

"I heard a woman scream..."

said Cure Moonlight. Cologne pushed the sphere in Cure Moonlight's face. Upon seeing the sight of her comatose mother, Cure Moonlight was at a loss for words.

"H, Haruna-san!"

It was Kaoruko who broke the silence.

“Cure Moonlight! Your mother’s Heart Flower has been stolen! If she remains separated from it for too long, it will wither and she will remain trapped within the crystal sphere forever!”

After hearing what Cologne had to say, Cure Moonlight started trembling with rage.

“Cure Moonlight! It is dangerous to fight out of anger! Just think of rescuing your mother and fight with composure.”

Cure Moonlight’s trembling stopped.

“I will protect my mother’s Heart Flower!”

Having regained her composure, Cure Moonlight leapt out and dashed towards the station.

She was astounded by her own speed.

- Is this the power of a Precure!?

Pulverizing the Sunakkis in an instant with a barrage of kicks and punches, she found herself standing in front of Sasorina.

“W, who are you supposed to be~?”

Sasorina let out a gasp of surprise.

“A Precure born to protect the Great Heart Tree and the Heart Flowers of the people, Cure Moonlight!”

“A, a Precure you say~!?”

She started to cower in fear, but was back on her feet in no time.

“So you guys *do* appear every time we try to take over the Earth~.”

“Return that Heart Flower this instant!”

“He, he, he~... That is something I cannot do~.”

“Then, I shall reclaim it by force!”

Cure Moonlight closed in on her and before she could strike her with her masterful Shōteiuchi, Sasorina vanished.

“What!?”

Cure Moonlight scanned her surroundings and found Sasorina standing beside a nearby post box.

“Desertorian, it’s time to make your appearance~!”

shouted Sasorina. The crystal containing Haruna's Heart Flower and the post box crossed each other. Together with a blinding light, the post box grew in size and sprouted arms and legs, turning into a monster. A Desertorian was born.

The Desertorian let out a roar and immediately tried to trample Cure Moonlight. With a timely jump, she avoided the assault. That jump took her 50 meters into the air.

- My jumping power has also exceeded my expectations! So this is the power of the Precure.

With the throbbing in her chest, Cure Moonlight felt confident.

She made a dive for the Desertorian, rolled over and let fly a flurry of kicks to its stomach with both her legs.

The Desertorian shrieked as it was blown away, crashing into the station wall.

She closed in on the Desertorian and was about to continue her assault when the hunched over Desertorian began to speak. It was as if words were being squeezed out from inside it.

"Why don't you call ... You used to do so so often..."

Cure Moonlight halted in her tracks, perplexed by the words being spoken by the Desertorian in the middle of the fight.

As it stood up, it continued speaking,

"Do you know just how worried Yuri-chan is...?"

With the mention of her name, Cure Moonlight realized that the Desertorian was speaking out her mother's anguish.

"What tripe are you babbling on about~? Hurry up and defeat the Precure~!"

The Desertorian's gaze sharpened after taking that rebuke.

"Take this!"

It then proceeded to spit out letters and postcards that were turned into bombs.

Cure Moonlight performed multiple reverse summersaults to evade the bombs but was thrown back by the impact from the explosions.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha~... You're nothing but talk after all~! Let loose and fire away!"

The Desertorian started to moan.



“I can’t bear living without you! Come home!”

it lamented as it fired round after round.

Hearing her mother’s cries of anguish, Cure Moonlight couldn’t bring herself to attack and could only evade the attacks.

Seeing this, Cologne came flying.

“The only way to save your mother is to purify the Desertorian and reclaim her Heart Flower. Quickly, before her Heart Flower withers completely!”

Cure Moonlight nodded and glared at the Desertorian.

“The letters and postcards that you’re spitting out are full of people’s feelings. To turn them into bombs is unforgivable!”

Once she finished her line, she closed in on the Desertorian and rained powerful kicks and punches on it.

Having sustained heavy damage, standing up was all it could muster. Cure Moonlight grabbed its arm and hurled it into the sky. She followed it up with a jump, passed the Desertorian in mid-air, flipped around, dived and landed a crushing blow on its stomach.

The Desertorian let out a scream, and collided with the ground, leaving a deep impact crater.

It no longer had the strength to crawl, let alone get up.

“Now’s your chance! Purify it with your Moon Tact!”

At Cologne’s words, Moonlight yelled,

“Gather, floral power! Moon Tact!”

The flower emblem on her chest shone brightly. Using her right hand, she pulled the Moon Tact out of it. The tip of the Moon Tact had a crystal attached to it and the thick crystal dome at its centre could draw in and condense floral power – the same power that was used to purify Desertorians and extract Heart Flowers.

Cure Moonlight held up the Moon Tact.

“Flowers, shine! Precure, Silver Forte Wave!”

She swung the Tact down and an energy ball in the shape of a flower burst forth from its tip.

The energy ball hit the Desertorian right smack in its belly, enveloping it in holy light and lifting it up into the air.

“Haaaaaaa!”

shouted Cure Moonlight. She waved the Moon Tact, like she was drawing circles in the air, and the holy light grew more intense. The purification had begun.

The Desertorian became at ease, dissolved into sparkles of light and vanished, leaving behind the crystal containing Haruna’s Heart Flower.

She grabbed it and saw that the Rape Blossoms inside it weren’t withered anymore and finally let out a sigh of relief.

Sasorina, who was watching everything unfold before her, flew into a rage. She teleported and appeared on top of the fountain’s statue behind Moonlight and let down her tied-up hair.

“Eat this!”

Extending and turning into a long braid, her hair shot towards Cure Moonlight and wrapped itself around her neck.

“Cologne, I leave this in your care!”

Cure Moonlight entrusted the crystal containing the Heart Flower to Cologne and grabbed the hair around her neck.

“He,he, he, now you’ve done it! The tip of my hair has a stinger with lots of venom in it~. You’ll be going to heaven with just one sting~!”

The end of her hair morphed into the shape of a scorpion’s tail and made a beeline for Cure Moonlight’s neck.

Cure Moonlight wasn’t fazed in the slightest.

“I will never lose to those who toy with the hearts of people, Desert Apostle!”

With a single knifehand strike, she severed Sasorina’s snake-like hair. Together with the stinger end wrapped around her neck, she fell to the ground.

Cure Moonlight grabbed the other end and, as if winding up for a hammer throw, swung the hair around her.

Sasorina, who was attached to the other end, was lifted into the sky by her hair.

“Gyaaaa, what are you doing~!?”

Cure Moonlight get go and the dizzy Sasorina was launched into the sky and crashed into side of a nearby building.

Sasorina, who was implanted into the wall, bit her lip.

“This was only a greeting~. We won’t go so easy on you next time~. Remember this!”

With her excuses out of the way, she teleported away. The fallen Sunakkis vanished along with her.

“Great work Cure Moonlight. Mmph... A Heart Seed is about to be born.”

Cologne turned his back to Cure Moonlight and waved his tail. Like a chicken laying an egg, a Heart Seed that looked like a small yellow coin was pushed out.

Cure Moonlight caught it in her hand and it started to glow.

“What...?”

Opening her hand, the Heart Seed vanished.

“Where did the Heart Seed go?”

“No worries. It’s being kept in the Heart Pot that Coupe-sama is holding on to.”

Cologne smiled.

Looking back at the parking lot, she saw Kaoruko beckoning her.

People were starting to gather around the rotary in front of the station.

Rushing over to the parking lot and following Kaoruko’s directions, she held onto Coupe together with Cologne.

Once again, Coupe disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Tsukikage Haruna regained her consciousness in the Doll House.

“Mother, are you alright?”

Yuri, who was back to normal, called out to her mom.

“Yuri-chan...!”

Haruna, who was stretched out on a sofa, got up. Kaoruko smiled.

“You’re finally awake. Haruna-san, are you alright?”

“Curator!? It has been awhile!”

Haruna bowed, but then tilted her head to the side.

“What... am I doing here?”

Kaoruko gave Yuri a wink and said,

“There was a big fiasco in front of the station. By the time I got there, you were lying unconscious in front of the store. Yuri came rushing over too and we carried you back here.”

“I see... I don’t remember a thing. I’m sorry for the trouble.”

Haruna lowered her head.

“Thank goodness you seem perfectly unharmed. Yuri-chan, why don’t you take your mother home?”

“Right. Well then.”

Yuri bowed to Kaoruko and reached down to pick up Cologne, who was pretending to be a plush toy, from the table.

“Ah!”

Haruna let out a small sound.

“What’s wrong, mother?”

“I forgot to hand over my shift. I’ll be making my way to the station.”

“Got it. I’ll tag along.”

“Thank you. I know! It’s been awhile. What say we eat out tonight?”

Haruna smiled and bowed once again to Kaoruko before taking her leave with Yuri.

On the way to the station, Yuri sensed that her mother's heart was at ease.

"Mother, did something good happen today?"

"Not really. It's just that..."

Haruna went quiet.

"Just that?"

"You'll make fun of me if I say it."

Haruna giggled like a schoolgirl.

"I won't laugh. Tell me."

"You promise?"

"I promise I won't laugh."

"Alright. I had a dream while I was unconscious."

"What kind of a dream?"

"One where I became a postbox."

"What!?"

Yuri gasped and stopped in her tracks.

Haruna was taken aback by Yuri's reaction. She wasn't laughing.

"Oh? You're not laughing?"

"And then what happened?"

Yuri was trying to stop herself from shaking. Haruna let out a chuckle.

"I went on a rampage and hurled insults at your father."

Haruna was enjoying herself. Yuri was relieved to see that she didn't know that it was her own daughter that defeated the Desertorian.

"That aside, what's with the plush toy that you've been carrying around with you recently?"

It was Cologne's turn to tense up.

"I saw it in the window of a fancy goods store. I fell in love with it, so I bought it."

“I see. I didn’t know you liked that kind of stuff.”

Haruna giggled like a schoolgirl again and took Cologne to study him more closely.

“It’s not as cute as I’d thought. How about I buy you something cuter?”

Yuri couldn’t help herself and burst out laughing. She noticed Cologne glaring at her, unbeknownst to Haruna.

“I’m not too good with plush toys that are cute enough to be liked by anyone. He’s good the way he is, slightly cheeky.”

She laughed and took Cologne back from her mother.

“That reminds me, you used to have something like that when you were young.”

They arrived at the station as they were chatting.

The station was bustling with police and reporters. Haruna made her way to her workplace, explained what happened to the late shift staff and apologized.

Yuri was looking on and Cologne glared at her.

“Well, I’m *sorry* for being cheeky.”

Yuri giggled.

“Well, she *did* believe me. You’re lucky I’m not a fan of cute things.”

She cast Cologne a mischievous glance.

He sulked in return, but quickly turned it into a smile.

“Cologne, my mother said it was a dream. Does she actually remember everything that happened while she was unconscious?”

“Looks like it. She seems to have relieved a lot of stress through the Desertorian by speaking her mind.”

“I see... In any case, I’m glad to see that she’s happy again.”

“Hey, don’t forget that the battle with the Desert Apostles has only just begun. We can’t have you celebrating just yet.”

“Yes, I know. I will become stronger. I will fight until I am deemed worthy enough to meet with the Great Heart Tree.”

“That’s the spirit. The Great Heart Tree is watching over you. I don’t think it will be too long before you’ll be able to meet with it. I’m sure you’ll find a clue to your father’s disappearance.”

Yuri gave Cologne a big nod as Haruna returned.

“Finished?”

“Yup. Let’s get something good to eat.”

Haruna took hold of Yuri’s hand and started walking off.

It had been ages since she felt the warmth of her mother’s hand. With that, she followed her mother with a spring in her step.

Around the same time, within the Desert Apostles' hideout, Sasorina was relaying the news of the new Precure's appearance to the masked man. He was named Professor Sabaaku and was entrusted by Dune to oversee the Earth Desertification Project.

To the left and right of Sabaaku were the other two commanders, Cobraja and Kumojacky. They were overjoyed.

"Bravo! So, a new Precure *did* appear after all."

"...and? How strong was the Precure?"

Sasorina averted her gaze upon hearing Kumojacky's question.

"Today was nothing but a greeting so I can't say for sure yet~."

Kumojacky snickered.

"Knowing you, you lost and came running back here with your tail between your legs."

"Don't joke~! The next time we meet, I'll be sure to finish her off with these hands~!"

She approached Kumojacky and grabbed his collar.

"Hmph."

He shook her off and threatened her.

"The one to defeat the new Precure... will be me!"

"What are you talking about~? I saw her first~! No one needs a muscle head like you~."

"Say that again!?"

Kumojacky's well-trained pecs started twitching in anger.

"You're behaving like children."

Cobraja swept aside his long bangs and threw them a look of smug disdain before making his way to Sabaaku's chair.

"I implore you to leave the Precure's disposal to me."

Cobraja placed his right hand over his chest and took a bow.

"That's my job!"

"No, mine~!"

They drew closer to Cobraja, but were silenced by Sabaaku.



“I will not forgive independent action. I will be the one to decide who goes.”

He waved them aside, got up and left the room.

To help him take over the Earth, he gave birth to the three commanders who acted as his right-hand men.

Sabaaku had access to all the latest, cutting-edge technology on Dune’s Planetary Castle. Together with the Desert Apostle’s scientists, he first created Sasorina, followed by Kumojacky and finally, Cobraja. They were artificial humans created using the genes of three life forms that thrived in deserts – scorpions, spiders and cobras. Their genes were fused with the mostly wilted Heart Flowers of three people that he kidnapped. One could say that they were beings similar to Desertorians.

Sasorina used to be a nursery school teacher. After an unfortunate accident resulting in the death of one of her charges, she was rejected by society and suffered a mental breakdown necessitating hospitalization.

Kumojacky was aiming to become a professional martial artist. However, his rough demeanor and self-centered mindset only brought him misfortune and he was barred entry from all the schools. He was kidnapped while he was wallowing in despair.

Cobraja was a fashion coordinator. He abused models who weren’t as beautiful as he was and fought with designers who refused to produce clothes that were to his liking. Eventually, he was cast out from the fashion world.

Sabaaku had high hopes for these three commanders but was worried that their clashing personalities would cause problems.

Returning to his private quarters he cast his gaze upon the writhing, beautiful new life that was floating in the cultivation tank.

It was a curled-up young girl, floating like a baby in its mother’s womb. A wing-like appendage extended from her back.

“Hurry up and be born. My daughter,”

said Sabaaku in a gleeful trance.

## **End of Chapter 1**



## Chapter 2 - The Fall of Cure Moonlight

Two years have passed since Tsukikage Yuri became Cure Moonlight.

One after another, she defeated every single Desertrian created by the three generals, Sasorina, Kumojacky and Cobraja, and saved the people who had been deprived of their Heart Flowers. Sometimes, she even had direct face-offs with one of the three generals, but not once had she been defeated. Her fighting skills were so impressive that she was nearing the level of Cure Flower, who was said to be the strongest Precure in history.

The partnership between Cure Moonlight and Cologne played a major role in this.

No matter how much they kept winning, they would never forget to analyse how they fought that day, reflect upon it, and use it as a guide for their next battle.

Yuri has entered Myoudou Academy's high school branch, and was now all grown-up; Cologne, still as sharp-tongued as ever, was able to analyse the enemy accurately and give good advice – watching over them, Hanasaki Kaoruko was satisfied. However, she believed that the reason why they were able to keep up their winning streak also had to do with the fact that the three generals have never once cooperated and attacked her together yet.

When Kaoruko herself was a Precure, she had often fallen into a tight spot due to the generals of the Desert Apostles cooperating with each other. However, Coupe would save her each time, so nothing serious happened.

Comparing Coupe then with Cologne now, Coupe was far superior in every aspect. Nowadays, he usually just spaces out, but if the need arose, he would still be capable of defeating the generals.

Cologne, however, was still a growing fairy, who had no such ability. If by chance, the generals were to attack all at once...

Furthermore, Kaoruko was concerned about the existence of the masked man who appeared on the screen when the Desert Apostles hijacked the radio waves two years ago.

The masked man behind the three generals, sitting on a throne-like chair, was not Dune. However, his atmosphere left no doubt that he was a being of superior fighting ability to the three generals.

If that masked man appeared before Cure Moonlight...

*As I thought, I may have to take Cure Moonlight to the Precure Palace and have her undergo the trial, just like I did before her,* Kaoruko thought to herself, but shook her head immediately. The Precure trial meant having to face off and win against the previous Precure in order to obtain the Heartcatch Mirage, which was able to expand a Precure's power to infinite level.

Kaoruko still believed that it was thanks to the Heartcatch Mirage that she was able to fight against Dune, the leader of the Desert Apostles, on equal grounds. However, it was two and a half years after Kaoruko became a Precure that she obtained the Heartcatch Mirage. That was the time when the Heart Pot became full of Heart Seeds as well.

The Heart Seeds that Cure Moonlight collected still have yet to fill the Heart Pot.

When she thought about whether Yuri, who has only become a Precure two years ago, would be able to pass the Precure trial, Kaoruko couldn't help but hesitate.

Of course, the current Kaoruko didn't have the strength to fight Yuri. She believed she would have no choice but to have her fight against Coupe in her stead.

If Coupe fights her without any restraint, even Yuri, who is able to defeat the three generals with ease, may have no chance of winning. When Kaoruko fought against the previous Precure, Cure Rose, she had been about 20 years younger than Kaoruko was now, but it was still an utterly serious battle with no holding back. In fact, it was so fierce that she could even say that it was a battle of life and death.

*I cannot let Yuri-chan experience a setback now that she is finally passionate about her mission as a Precure and devoting herself to it,* Kaoruko thought, and decided to wait a little longer.

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Indeed, just as Kaoruko thought, Professor Sabaaku had also ordered the three generals to cooperate and defeat Cure Moonlight. But even though they agreed to it in his presence, in reality, the three of them only fought individually, and it made him irritated.

In another year or two, Dune will come to Earth. Sabaaku feared his life would be in danger if he didn't turn the Earth into a desert until then. Dune was a brutal man like that.

In his fear and frustration, Sabaaku manipulated the growth speed of the girl inside the incubator. The girl grew up quickly, but as a result, the wings on her back distorted and only one of them developed. Although she was an artificial human, Sabaaku couldn't help but feel sorry for her, as he had raised her as his daughter.

But finally, the time has come for the girl to come out of the incubator.

Sabaaku named his daughter Dark Precure, and dressed her in a black gothic lolita-style attire. But he did not allow her to call him her father.

The relationship between Sabaaku and Dark Precure was closer to a master-servant relationship than that of a child and her parent. Dark Precure, who lacked a Heart Flower, followed the orders of Sabaaku obediently.

Sabaaku's first mission for Dark Precure was to uncover the true identity of Cure Moonlight.

Previously, he had already given this task to a general who doesn't fight Cure Moonlight, only to fail every time because her fairy, Cologne, had sensed him by his eager bloodthirst.

"You don't have to fight Cure Moonlight. Just focus on finding out her identity."

"Yes." Dark Precure bowed, and left the room.

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Dark Precure arrived in the city of Kibougahana just when Cure Moonlight defeated Cobraja's Desertian and retrieved the Heart Flower.

Dark Precure hid on the roof of an apartment building a bit further from the station, and watched how things would continue to unfold between Cure Moonlight and Cobraja.

"Cure Moonlight, you truly are beautiful. I love to defile beautiful things. I want to see that beautiful face of yours mutilated!"

As he slightly raised his right hand, four cards appeared between Cobraja's fingers. Each card was a photo of Cobraja striking a pose.

Cure Moonlight glared at Cobraja as she handed the crystal containing the Heart Flower to Cologne.

"You never learn your lesson, huh? You won't beat me with those cards."

"Fufufu, these aren't the only cards I've got for you today. I've also brought my strongest card!"

Cobraja confidently crossed his arms, and a new card appeared in his left hand as well. It was a picture of himself in a sexy pose, wearing nothing but swimming trunks.

“...!”

Cure Moonlight was furious to the point of disgust.

“Hm? Are you not pleased?”

“How stupid! Let’s get this settled at once!”

“Stupid, you say? How dare you say that about my rare card! Take this then!” Cobraja jumped up in rage, and threw eight cards with both of his hands at Cure Moonlight. “Rare card explosions are twice as powerful. Adieu, Precure!”

Just as Cobraja grinned, Cure Moonlight thrust her hands out with a bang towards the flying cards.

“Moonlight Reflection!”

The palms of her hands flashed, and two circular silver shields appeared, shooting out towards the flying cards.

Then, Cure Moonlight quickly drew a circle with her outstretched palms. The two shields followed the motion, blocking the bombing of the flying cards.

One after the other, the cards hit the shields, exploding, yet the shields remained unperturbed.

“W-what?! When did you learn such a move?!”

“You Desert Apostles generals really don’t communicate with each other. Just ask Sasorina and Kumojacky!”

“Those guys...!”

Cobraja's shoulders shook with anger; once again, he made card bombs appear in both hands, and threw them at Cure Moonlight.

Cure Moonlight jumped at once, lowering her left palm backwards, and thrusting her right in Cobraja’s direction.

Then, the two silver shields separated, one moving instantly in front of the card bombs, and the other to Cobraja’s side.

Cure Moonlight was in control of the shields' movements.

Just before the card bombs could hit the first shield, the angle of the surface shifted. Instead of exploding, the card bombs were repelled by the shield, and flew towards the second one.

“W-what the...!” As Cobraja shouted in surprise, Cure Moonlight changed the angle of her right wrist.

Simultaneously, the angle of the second shield’s surface shifted, repelling the flying card bombs. The cards were now heading towards Cobraja.

“...!”

Cobraja immediately tried to escape, but it was too late. The card bombs exploded one after another, sending him flying into the sky with a scream.

“Moonlight, I’ll make you pay for this!”

Cobraja disappeared in the blue sky, and only the echo of his defeated voice remained.

Watching this, Dark Precure felt a rush of anger.

“What a fool. Cure Moonlight will never be defeated if we leave it to these generals. I will take her out in one blow right here...” as she muttered, Cologne, who was by Cure Moonlight’s side, turned around in her direction.

Dark Precure ducked down immediately.

*Did he notice me?*

She composed herself and suppressed her murderous intents.

Noticing Cologne’s behaviour, Cure Moonlight asked:

“What’s wrong?”

Staring at the building where Dark Precure was hiding, Cologne said:

“I thought I felt a very strong presence, but it looks like I was mistaken.”

“Cologne, let’s return the Heart Flower to its owner quickly.”

Promptly, they hid, and placed the two crystals – the octagonal pyramid and the sphere – together. The person they saved that day was a 50-something office worker relegated to an inferior position.

Before the office worker could wake up, Cure Moonlight undid her transformation and turned back into Tsukikage Yuri. After the office worker came to, she told him he had collapsed here.

“It seems like you are alright now. Working for a company must be really hard with all kinds of challenges, but please continue to do your best. Then, I have to go now.”

The office worker looked dumbfounded for a moment, then smiled.

“Thank you,” he said, and bowed to Yuri as she left.

By that time, Dark Precure had already flown up from the roof of the apartment house to 500 metres in the sky, from where she could observe the situation. Her eyesight was sharper than that of a bird of prey, and her hearing was on par with that of a rabbit, allowing her to see Yuri's real face and hear her entire conversation with the office worker.

Satisfied that she stayed unnoticed by Yuri and Cologne, Dark Precure began to tail them slowly from the altitude.

Then, after seeing Yuri enter an apartment on the third floor of the Botanical Garden's employee residence, she swooped down and landed on the roof of a separate building. With that eyesight of hers, she looked at the nameplate by the entrance. Once she confirmed the names of “Tsukikage Hideaki, Haruna and Yuri”, she suppressed her desire to eliminate Yuri, and returned to the Desert Apostles' hideout.

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Upon hearing the name of Tsukikage Yuri from Dark Precure's mouth, Professor Sabaaku was taken aback. Although his expression was obscured by his mask, Dark Precure could still tell his bewilderment.

Sabaaku was sitting in his chair with his arms folded, deep in thought.

After a long silence, Dark Precure, unable to bear it any longer, asked:

“Professor Sabaaku, do you know that girl named Tsukikage Yuri?”

“No...”

Another long silence followed.

“I can defeat that girl even in her Precure form. Please, order me to eliminate Cure Moonlight.”



Trying not to let Dark Precure realise his disturbance, Sabaaku said calmly:

“We can leave that to Sasorina and the others. I have a much more important mission for you.”

“A mission more important than defeating Cure Moonlight...?”

“Finding the Great Heart Tree. If the Great Heart Tree withers, Precures will lose their power as well.”

“I see...”

Sabaaku was relieved that Dark Precure showed interest, and told her that the Great Heart Tree always moved from place to place, where the water and the air were clean and people rarely came. He then projected a world map on the wall behind his chair, and indicated the potential places where the Great Heart Tree might take roots with red dots. At a rough count, there were at least 5000.

“You want me to investigate all these places?”

“That’s right. If anyone is able to do it, it’s you, right?”

“Understood.” Dark Precure bowed, and left the room.

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Following Professor Sabaaku’s orders, Dark Precure kept searching for the Great Heart Tree.

Three months later, she discovered it deep in the mountains of Switzerland. However, when the Great Heart Tree became aware of Dark Precure's presence, it created a smokescreen-like thick fog around itself. When the fog lifted, the Great Heart Tree disappeared without a trace, along with its surrounding soil.

Dark Precure frantically searched the area, but was unable to find it.

“Well, that’s fine. The next time I see it, I’ll make sure to wither it,” talking to herself, she headed to the hideout to report back to Sabaaku.

Dark Precure returned to the Desert Apostles’ hideout floating around the Earth’s orbit, and was about to enter Professor Sabaaku’s chamber, when she spotted Sasorina sitting on the edge of the castle wall, gazing out at the desolately expanding desert.

“Are you sulking because you lost to Cure Moonlight again?”

Sasorina turned around in surprise when she suddenly heard the voice behind her.

“What, it’s just you? You have some nerve calling out to me like that in your low position~!”

“Oh? So I’m lower than you?” Dark Precure said in a provocative manner.

“Ahh, you’re pissing me off! Even just looking at your face reminds me of that damn Precure, it makes my blood boil! Just go away already~!”

Sasorina's unexpected words left Dark Precure perplexed.

“What do you mean?”

“What, you didn’t notice? Aside from your hairstyle and hair colour, your face is the spitting image of Cure Moonlight’s.”

“I’m Cure Moonlight’s...?!”

Noticing Dark Precure’s confusion, Sasorina began to taunt her as revenge for losing to Cure Moonlight.

“Even your name is Dark Precure, so you must have Cure Moonlight’s DNA as well, no?”

“That’s not possible!”

“I wonder about that~. I heard this from the Desert Apostles scientists before~... The three of us have been injected with the DNA of scorpions and cobras and such, but when Professor Sabaaku created you, he used some human hair that he kept inside an amulet or something...”

Sasorina didn’t finish talking yet, when a small “Ah!” escaped Dark Precure’s mouth.

The blurry thoughts that have been swirling around in her head until now finally dissolved, and she felt like her vision became clearer.

*The reason why the Professor won’t let me kill Cure Moonlight is because my body contains the DNA of that girl called Tsukikage Yuri... This explains everything.* Dark Precure continued to think further. *Then, does this make me and Tsukikage Yuri like sisters?*

Dark Precure’s silence made Sasorina raise an eyebrow, so she asked:

“Hey, are you even listening to me~?”

“You’re interrupting my thoughts!” Dark Precure lightly hit Sasorina with the back of her hand. However, her blow was too powerful, and Sasorina was sent flying to the other end of the desert with a scream.

Dark Precure entered the building of the hideout without even looking back at her.

In front of Professor Sabaaku’s chamber, she came into a halt. A new question arose in her mind.

*Did Professor Sabaaku use to be human as well? But now he is the centre figure in the Desert Apostles’ plans of conquering the Earth, and is deeply trusted by King Dune. However...* She stopped herself from thinking any further. Asking Professor Sabaaku about his real intentions scared her. Even though Sabaaku didn’t let her call him “father”, the way he told her about various things regarding Earth and humans was just like how a father would explain it to his daughter. *I shouldn’t do things that Professor Sabaaku wouldn’t like*, having made up her mind, Dark Precure entered Professor Sabaaku’s chamber, and only reported about the Great Heart Tree.

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Since then, Dark Precure has made many secret visits to the city of Kibougahana while continuing her search for the Great Heart Tree.

Sometimes, she would gather information about Tsukikage Yuri in disguise. Learning that Yuri’s father had disappeared in France over two years ago confirmed Dark Precure’s suspicions.

And to back up her theory, she inquired from Kumojacky:

“Did Professor Sabaaku use to be human?”

“Why are you asking this?” Kumojacky asked quizzically.

“No reason, I was just curious.”

“Well, he’s like a father to you, so it’s not like I don’t understand, I just don’t really know either. But I heard from Bossnackey once that Professor Sabaaku was researching the Great Heart Tree, and when his research came to a standstill, he was recruited by King Dune, and apparently became his subordinate.”

Dark Precure nodded in acknowledgement, then left Kumojacky on the spot.

“Hey, not a single thank you? What an unpleasant little brat.” Kumojacky watched her leave with a bitter expression.

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The next day, Dark Precure pretended to go search for the Great Heart Tree, but followed Kumojacky instead, as he set out for Kibougahana.

In the park next to the Botanical Garden, the Desertrian created by Kumojacky was defeated and purified by Cure Moonlight, as usual.

Before long, Kumojacky stopped fighting her.

“I’m currently working on a special move to defeat you. Next time we meet, I’ll come back at you, just wait for it,” he said, then disappeared into thin air.

Dark Precure, who had been watching the scene from above, felt anger at Kumojacky, just like with Cobraja before. Moreover, seeing Cure Moonlight bask in the applause of the onlookers only made her furiosity well up more.

*The only daughter of Professor Sabaaku should be me*, and with that thought, Dark Precure made a sudden plunge.

After returning the Heart Flower of the housewife who had been turned into a Desertrian due to a conflict with her husband, Cure Moonlight suddenly felt a terrific killing intent, and looked up to the sky.

A black shadow-like thing was approaching at fast speed.

Realising there was no time to take the unconscious housewife to safety, Cure Moonlight jumped to intercept her.

The speed with which Dark Precure came plummeting was so tremendous that she blew away the ascending Cure Moonlight with a single punch.

Cure Moonlight crashed into a tree trunk and fell to the ground. Her cheek swelled up from the powerful blow, and blood began dripping from her mouth.

Nevertheless, she mustered up her strength to stand up, while Dark Precure landed in front of her, wearing a bold smile on her face.

“Who on earth are you?!”

“My name is Dark Precure.”

Cure Moonlight was taken aback.

“A Precure, you said?!”

Cure Moonlight was not the only one surprised. Hanasaki Kaoruko was too, who had been watching from behind the plants in the Botanical Garden. And there was one more person behind her: Coupe.

“Coupe, you’re here. If something happens to Cure Moonlight, help her, please.”

Coupe blinked his eyes at Kaoruko’s words.

Dark Precure spoke to Cure Moonlight as she slowly approached:

“If you are the moon’s light, then I am the moon’s shadow. When the shadow swallows the light, this world will be shrouded in darkness and belong to us, the Desert Apostles.”

“I will never let that happen!”

Cure Moonlight fiercely rushed forward, delivering a series of powerful kicks and thrusts, but Dark Precure dodged all of her attacks.

“Your skills are not enough to beat me. Now it’s my turn to attack!”

Dark Precure began to assault her with kicks and thrusts as well. Cure Moonlight seemingly blocked them all with the karate techniques Kaoruko had taught her, but for Dark Precure, this wasn’t more than a trick to buy herself time.

While she lunged her kicks at Cure Moonlight, Dark Precure was accumulating dark energy in her palm, then released it all at Cure Moonlight in one go.

Cure Moonlight realised Dark Precure’s intention halfway through the kick, and despite crossing her arms to defend against it, she was once again blown away by the sheer force of the energy wave with a scream.

However, just before hitting the ground, she spun around, barely managing to put her legs down.

*She is different from the Desert Apostles generals I have fought before. She is...!*

Cure Moonlight flung her right arm down to the side with a quick diagonal move.

“Gather, power of flowers! Moon Tact!”

The Moon Tact appeared in her hand. At that moment, Dark Precure's right eye, which had been closed all this time, suddenly snapped open. Unlike her left eye, which was blue, this one was a gold colour.

“Powers of darkness, gather up! Dark Tact!”

With a similar gesture, Dark Precure also summoned a black “Dark Tact”, resembling her own Moon Tact.

“B...But...!”

Taking advantage of Cure Moonlight’s apparent shock, Dark Precure made the first move.

“Precure Dark Power Fortissimo!”

As she swung down her Dark Tact, a sinister *ff* mark appeared, turned into a red energy wave, and flew in the direction of Cure Moonlight.

Cure Moonlight was only a minute late:

“Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!”

An *ff* mark similar to Dark Precure’s appeared, releasing an energy wave of holy silver light.

The red and silver waves collided. However, because Dark Precure shot the energy wave sooner, it had more power due to the speed it gained, and when she gave a push to the source of the energy wave, it caused a huge explosion in front of Cure Moonlight. The smoke enveloped the surroundings.

“I won... The shadow swallowed the light,” muttering so, the face of Professor Sabaaku, who she secretly admired as her father, appeared in Dark Precure’s mind.

Although Sabaaku had told her to stay out of Cure Moonlight’s elimination, he would surely be pleased if she brought back her corpse for him.

Just imagining that scene made Dark Precure’s heart tremble with joy.

“Professor Sabaaku, please, wait for me,” she whispered, while waiting for the smoke to clear.

But when it did, Cure Moonlight was nowhere to be seen.

“What?!” As Dark Precure exclaimed in shock, several rose petals came scattering from behind, dancing in the wind.

Turning around, Dark Precure saw a young man standing on a streetlamp in the park, holding the unconscious Tsukikage Yuri in his arms, whose transformation was reversed to a white dress. The bespectacled young man, who was wearing a shosei-style kasuri kimono and hakama from the Taishou era, was in fact, Coupe in human form.

“Who the hell are you?!”

Without saying a word, Coupe looked down to Dark Precure with an indifferent look on his face. Cologne was also with him, sitting on his right shoulder.

“Damn you! If you won’t answer, I’ll force it out of you...!” Dark Precure readied the Dark Tact.

“Stop it, Dark Precure!”

This was when she heard a voice, and Professor Sabaaku suddenly appeared by her side.

“P-Professor Sabaaku?!”

Ignoring the astonished Dark Precure, Sabaaku thrust out his right hand infused with dark energy towards the trio.

Simultaneously, Coupe held up his left to the sky, making a whirlwind of rose petals arise. The moment Sabaaku released the energy wave, Coupe disappeared into thin air with Yuri in his arms.

The energy wave exploded in the sky ahead.

“Professor, who was that man just now...” Just as she was about to ask, a strong slap came flying in her direction.

She was knocked off her feet and tumbled to the ground.

“Pro...Professor?” Dark Precure looked like she was on the verge of tears.

“Even though I told you to stay away from Cure Moonlight! You little...!”

Dark Precure crouched down, holding her head in her hands, expecting another slap. However, instead of slapping her, Sabaaku grabbed her right wrist. Dark Precure could feel his fury from the incredible force.

Just as Dark Precure lifted up her gaze at Sabaaku in fear, the two of them disappeared from sight.

Kaoruko, who was watching the scene, shivered at the unfathomable dreadfulness of the masked man.

“I have to do something about this,” she said to herself, and hurriedly left the place.

It was just when she entered the Plush Toy Hall that Yuri regained her consciousness.

“W-what has...? Where’s Dark Precure?”

“Don’t worry. That masked man... I think she called her Professor Sabaaku. He has taken her away.”

The memories of being blown away by the attack that came from Dark Precure's Tact resurfaced in Yuri's mind by Kaoruko’s words.

“Just who is this Dark Precure?”

“I don’t know. She was probably created by the Desert Apostles to fight against Precures... However, that masked man called Sabaaku, who appeared while you were unconscious, possesses even greater dark power than her.”

“Next time, I’m not going to lose against Dark Precure or that masked man,” Yuri said, holding her swollen cheeks where Dark Precure had punched her.

“I understand how you feel, Yuri-chan, but however I look at it, Dark Precure’s powers are on par with you as Cure Moonlight. I believe Sabaaku is much stronger.”

“No way...”

Yuri almost felt slightly dizzy. She certainly acknowledged Dark Precure’s strength, but she didn’t want to lose the next time they met.

“I want to become stronger,” Yuri said, and Cologne, who was listening to the conversation on the table, replied:

“You certainly can.”

“Cologne?”

Cologne smiled, stuck his right arm into the heart mark on Coupe’s chest, and pulled out the Heart Pot to put the Heart Seed into it that was born when Yuri had saved the housewife earlier.



“With this, the Pot is full, Cure Flower.”

Kaoruko took the Heart Pot from Cologne, and confirming that it was full of Heart Seeds, she looked at Yuri and said:

“It looks like the right time has come. Yuri-chan, when the swelling in your cheek has subsided, take this with you to the Precure Palace.”

“The Precure Palace?”

“It’s a sacred castle where you can only enter when you have filled the Heart Pot with Heart Seeds. It’s a place that lets you become a stronger Precure than you are now, in order to protect the Great Heart Tree and people’s Heart Flowers.”

“I understand. I’ll go there right now.”

“No need to rush, Yuri-chan. When you go to the Precure Palace, a big trial will await you. You will have to be in perfect physical and mental condition to overcome that trial.”

“A trial... What kind of trial is it?”

“I cannot tell you that. But I do know that you will be able to overcome it.”

Yuri nodded and took the Heart Pot from Kaoruko.

“I’ll come back here as soon as the swelling goes down,” she said, and left the Plush Toy Hall with Cologne.

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Once again, Dark Precure was out on her mission to find the Great Heart Tree.

Three days have passed since she had fought Cure Moonlight without Professor Sabaaku’s permission. During those three days, Dark Precure was kept in confinement, but Sabaaku allowed her to leave this morning, and she was now flying through the thick clouds covering the earth to complete her mission.

The words of Sabaaku echoed over and over again in her head:

“You were born to be my right-hand man. Why are you concerning yourself with your trivial feelings when you don’t even have a Heart Flower?! From now on, you will only do what I order you to!”

While she wanted to regain the trust of Professor Sabaaku, who she loved as her father, her hatred towards Tsukikage Yuri doubled as well.

“Next time we meet, I’ll make sure to…” Dark Precure whispered, when her closed right eye suddenly opened.

She spotted the Great Heart Tree floating slowly amongst the clouds.

Dark Precure notified Sabaaku immediately, and began to follow it from a distance, so that she would not be noticed by it.

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At the same time, Tsukikage Yuri, whose swollen cheek has completely healed now, was heading to the Plush Toy Hall in the Botanical Garden.

Upon seeing Yuri’s face, Kaoruko said:

“It looks like the swelling has gone down.”

“Yes, I’m about to go to the Precure Palace now.”

“Before you do… Just now, the voice of the Great Heart Tree reached out to my heart. It seems that it wants to see you.”

“Maybe it can give me some information about my father?” Yuri’s expression brightened.

“I’m not sure about that, but I do not think it’s bad news.”

“I understand. But how do I get…?”

“If you place the Heart Pot to Coupe’s chest, the holy light will take you to the Great Heart Tree.”

Yuri did as Kaoruko said, and put the Heart Pot to Coupe’s chest. In an instant, a white light enveloped Yuri’s and Cologne’s bodies, and they disappeared with a flash.

Kaoruko nodded with satisfaction, and looked at Coupe saying:

“Coupe, let’s go ahead to the Precure Palace and wait for them there.”

Coupe blinked his eyes, and Kaoruko held onto his chest. The next moment, the two of them were gone.

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“T-The... Great Heart Tree!” Yuri exclaimed in admiration, as she looked up at the Great Heart Tree towering in front of her.

The Great Heart Tree had several branches, each of which was covered with lush green foliage and blooming with countless colourful flowers. It radiated a divine atmosphere that made one think that it was truly the source of all life on Earth.

At that moment, the cave at the roots of the Great Heart Tree began to shine, and two pale pink and blue beams sprang out of it, stopping in front of Yuri and Cologne in the form of small fairies.

“Cologne, long time no see~!” said the fairy with perky ears when she saw Cologne.

“How have you been?” the fairy with drooping ears asked.

Cologne smiled, and introduced them to Yuri:

“This is Chypre and Coffret. They are fairies born from the Great Heart Tree, just like me.”

“Nice to meet you~. I am Chypre~,” Chypre, the one with perky ears introduced herself, and Coffret, the one with drooping ears followed suit immediately:

“I am Coffret. We have been watching Cure Moonlight’s successes together with the Great Heart Tree aaall this time!”

“Cure Moonlight is really powerful~!”

“Thank you. It is very nice to meet you too.” Yuri hugged them, and gently stroked their heads. “You two are very cute, unlike Cologne here,” she said with a mischievous smile.

“Well, well, looks like I’m not cute after all. Sorry for that.” Cologne pretended to sulk, but soon smiled. “Coffret and Chypre also have Heart Perfumes, like me. So I think we could recruit two more new Precures to be your companions.”

“We want to be of help to Cure Moonlight too~!”

“This is why the Great Heart Tree has called Cure Moonlight here!”

“Is that so...” Hoping to get information about her father, Yuri became a little disappointed; she let go of Chypre and Coffret, and turned away.

“Moonlight, you don’t want companions?”

Yuri answered Cologne’s question with her back still turned:

“I’m fine on my own. Cure Flower fought and defeated the leader of the Desert Apostles, Dune by herself too, right?”

“Yes, but... Things are different now from back then. Now they have Professor Sabaaku and Dark Precure.”

“Don’t worry. I’m not going to lose to anyone!” Yuri turned around, and smiled.

“But...” Chypre and Coffret were about to say something, but Cologne stopped them. He knew from Yuri’s expression that she was not going to change her mind. Yuri, who fought the Desert Apostles alone, had quit the track and field club she loved so much, and was constantly on the lookout against an enemy that could attack at any moment. Cologne believed that was too cruel for a 16 year old girl. That’s why she didn’t want anyone else to go through the same hardships as she did. Cologne genuinely respected Yuri for her kindness.

“Alright, Yuri. Let’s go to the Precure Palace to become stronger.” Cologne said, and Yuri nodded.

Suddenly, they heard the voice of a girl laughing from the sky above.

At the same time, a black shadow swooped down; it was Dark Precure.

“Dark Precure!” Yuri immediately hid Chypre and Coffret behind her back. “Chypre, Coffret, hide behind the Great Heart Tree,” she whispered, and the two of them flew off towards the Tree in a panic.

Dark Precure wore a self-confident smile as she landed in front of her.

“Fufufufu, to think I would meet you while chasing after the Great Heart Tree.”

“Cologne, give me the Precure Seed!” Yuri shouted, pulling out her Heart Perfume.

Cologne nodded, and quickly gave her the Precure Seed he summoned from his chest.

Yuri took it, inserted it in the Heart Perfume at once, and transformed into Cure Moonlight.

“The flower glistening in the light of the moon... Cure Moonlight!”

Dark Precure immediately made the first strike. But Cure Moonlight wasn't to be underestimated either. After blocking all of Dark Precure's kicks and punches, she began to counterattack.

The fierce alternating exchange of their fists continued, until the two of them jumped backwards.

After catching their breaths, the fight started once again. Just as Kaoruko said, the two of them were perfectly evenly matched.

They separated and regained their breaths for the second time.

Chypre and Coffret, who were trembling among the branches of the Great Heart Tree as they watched, along with Cologne, who observed their battle in front of the Tree, all sensed the presence of someone else, and they looked up at the sky.

A figure emitting an evil glow descended behind Cure Moonlight, materialising as Professor Sabaaku.

“Moonlight, Professor Sabaaku is here!” Cologne shouted, and Cure Moonlight glanced back at Sabaaku.

“Don't worry, I can handle them by myself!”

At that moment, Cure Moonlight was knocked over by a roundhouse kick from the rapidly approaching Dark Precure.

However, she stood up immediately, and attacked Dark Precure again. She couldn't afford to lose to the same opponent twice. Cure Moonlight's determination was fierce, and the fight was advancing to her advantage.

That was when Sabaaku held out his right hand towards Cure Moonlight, his palm filling up with dark energy in the blink of an eye.

Cure Moonlight hit Dark Precure in the abdomen with a palm heel strike, which caused her to stagger back a couple of steps. Cure Moonlight, seizing the opportunity, attempted to unleash a series of thrusts.

“Moonlight, look out!” Cologne shouted, jumping in front of Cure Moonlight with his arms open to protect her.

“What?!” The moment Cure Moonlight turned around, a dark energy shot out from Sabaaku’s palm.

The energy wave was flying at an extreme speed, and Cologne, who was shielding Cure Moonlight, was hit by the explosion.

As the blowing of the wind dispelled the smoke, she could see Cologne stopping the energy wave.

“Ah?!” Sabaaku shouted in surprise.

Absorbing the dark energy in exchange for his life, Cologne’s body had given in, falling to Cure Moonlight's feet.

“Cologne?!”

Cure Moonlight lifted him into her arms. Cologne gathered his last bit of strength, and whispered:

“Th... Thank goodness... You’re safe...” His body began to lose its colour. “Farewell... Cure Moonlight...” At that moment, he turned into ashes, disintegrated, and his remains were swept away by the wind.

“Colooooooooogne!” Cure Moonlight’s sorrowful voice rang out.

“Fufufufu, this is the end for you as well. You shall perish along with the Great Heart Tree,” Dark Precure smiled coldly.

Cure Moonlight, who was leaning over on her knees, crying, slowly stood up.

“I won’t forgive you... And I won’t stop fighting until I have avenged Cologne,” she said. “Gather, power of flowers! Moon Tact! Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!”

Simultaneously, Dark Precure too, recited:

“Powers of darkness, gather up! Dark Tact! Precure Dark Power Fortissimo!”

They drew an *ff* with their Tacts, got enveloped in their own silver and red lights, then fiercely approached, and violently clashed into each other. The two lights separated, and collided again.

But after a few more collisions, it was finally settled.

After distancing again, Dark Precure faltered, and fell onto one knee. For a moment, Cure Moonlight thought she had won; but that was not the case.

She let out a scream; her Precure costume disappeared, reverting her back to her pre-transformation white dress, and she fell backwards.

Her Moon Tact and her Heart Perfume were lying beside her.

Fighting out of pure hatred for losing Cologne, Cure Moonlight had no chance of winning.

The flowers and leaves of the Great Heart Tree that had been blooming so abundantly were being blown away by the wind, and were gradually dispersing.

Sabaaku started to laugh as he slowly came closer to Dark Precure.

“Kukukuku... The legendary warrior Precure has been defeated. Now, if the Great Heart Tree withers, this planet will belong to us, the Desert Apostles.”

However, even though all the flowers and leaves had fallen, the Great Heart Tree remained intact.

“What?! The flowers and leaves have fallen, so why doesn’t it wither?” Sabaaku exclaimed in frustration.

Cure Moonlight’s fingertips slightly twitched, and summoning the last bit of her strength, she lifted up her head.

“I-It’s too bad... Even if I fall... other Precures shall appear before you to protect the Great Heart Tree.”

With a sneer, Dark Precure raised the Dark Tact again.

“Fufufufu, now it’s over for you. Take this!” Swinging down her Tact, she released a dark energy.

Yuri blocked the energy wave with her purple Precure Seed she was holding in her hand. Then, she looked back at the Great Heart Tree, where Chypre and Coffret were watching her and trembling among the shades of the branches, and said:

“Chypre, Coffret, pass the Heart Perfume to the next Precure!”

Still quivering, they nodded, and took off into the sky.

“Out of my way!” As Dark Precure tried to chase after the two, the Precure Seed, not being able to hold back the dark power anymore, split.

“Fairies, go look for my replacement...!” Yuri’s face changed into one of resignation, as her Precure Seed finally broke with a crack.

Soon, a huge explosion followed.

The land around the Great Heart Tree, which had been floating in the air as if it was a huge bird, scattered, leaving smaller island-like chunks of earth flying everywhere.

Sabaaku and Dark Precure, who were standing on one of those, looked up at the larger island where the Great Heart Tree remained standing.

Right then, a sparkling object came flying from the island, and dropped in front of them.

Dark Precure picked it up, and saw that it was the two-third fragment of the broken Precure Seed.

“I will go check if Moonlight is dead.” Dark Precure was about to fly up to the Great Heart Tree, when Sabaaku stopped her.

“Even if she is alive, she cannot become a Precure anymore without her Precure Seed. Leave her.”

“But...”

At that moment, Sabaaku put his arm around her shoulder.

“...!”

Dark Precure looked up at Sabaaku’s profile in surprise.

“Well done, Dark Precure. Let’s go back and celebrate it.”

When he said that, a faint blush appeared on Dark Precure’s cheeks.

Upon hearing her first words of praise from Sabaaku, the person she loved as a father, Dark Precure’s face became blissful.

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Kaoruko and Coupe watched from beside the Great Heart Tree as the island with Sabaaku and Dark Precure drifted away.

Yuri, now both emotionally and physically broken, was resting in Coupe's arms.

Kaoruko and Coupe got worried about Yuri and Cologne, who never showed up at the Precure Palace, and by the time they arrived at the Great Heart Tree, all they witnessed was Yuri's defeat by Dark Precure.

Kaoruko's only consolation was that Coupe rushed to Yuri's rescue immediately.

"If only I had taken Yuri-chan to the Precure Palace a little sooner..." Tears welled up in Kaoruko's eyes.

Just then, Yuri's clenched right fist slowly opened, and something fell out of it. It was one half of her Precure Seed.

Picking it up, Kaoruko stared at the Precure Seed, now reduced to one-third of its original. As she clutched at the damaged Seed, which, just like Yuri's heart, was no longer shining, tears welled up in her eyes anew, falling to the ground.



### Chapter 3 - The New Precures

A row of sakura trees ran along the banks of the park near the Botanical Garden, which was brimming with flower viewers. The cherry blossoms came late this year, and were not in full bloom until the beginning of April.

Hanasaki Kaoruko was walking through the crowd with heavy steps.

Almost a week has passed since Cure Moonlight was defeated by Professor Sabaaku and Dark Precure. During that time, Kaoruko would visit Tsukikage Yuri's home at the Botanical Garden's employee residence every day, yet, she wasn't able to see her even once. Even though Kaoruko noticed the presence of someone inside the house, nobody responded to the sound of the doorbell, nor to her voice.

Once, she deliberately came at the time when Yuri's mother, Haruna, arrived home from work. Kaoruko asked her how Yuri was doing, but apparently, she had shut herself in her room, and only came out for meals and to use the bathroom, and wouldn't speak to Haruna either. She was at a loss at what to answer when Haruna asked her in return if she knew what might have happened to Yuri.

Spring break was almost over as well. Yuri should be in her second-year now at Myoudou Academy's high school, but Kaoruko was worried about whether she would be able to attend school properly at all. Her chest tightened at the thought that she had turned Yuri's whole life upside down just by making her a Precure.

Kaoruko wanted Yuri to get back on her feet somehow, and she has been relentlessly thinking about how to help her with that. Then, she remembered that Yuri had a classmate, the only person she could call a friend: Kurumi Momoka. The name came up from time to time in her casual daily conversations with Yuri; she was the daughter of the family who ran a fashion store called Fairy Drop next door to Kaoruko's house.

Kaoruko was just on her way to ask Momoka to drag Yuri outside in order to distract her from the situation. After getting out of the sakura viewing crowd, she headed towards Momoka's house, where the girl had already been waiting for her. She came trotting towards Kaoruko.

"Hanasaki-san, I finally managed to reach Yuri."

This morning, before going to the Botanical Garden, Kaoruko mentioned to Momoka that she had been worried about not being able to reach Yuri. Momoka also said that she had texted

her several times since the start of the spring break, but didn't receive any replies, and it got her concerned.

"And what did Yuri-chan say?"

"She promised to come shopping with me."

"Really? That's great! Thank you, Momoka-chan," as Kaoruko thanked her, a petite girl cheerfully hopped out of the store. It was Momoka's younger sister, Erika.

"Did you say shopping?! Which shop are you going to, Momo-nee?"

"That's none of your business," Momoka said with an annoyed expression, to which Erika raised her voice even more:

"You can't leave your cute little sister behind! Take! Me! Too!" she begged as she latched onto Momoka's arm.

"I'm going with a friend, so no way!"

"You can't be serious! Pleaseee!" Erika persisted, like a small child throwing a tantrum.

Unlike the mature-looking Momoka, who had been working as a model since childhood, Erika looked very young for a second year middle school student. In fact, she could easily pass as an elementary schooler. Even in their personalities, Momoka was the reserved, ever-cautious type, while Erika was always enthusiastic and overly optimistic.

Since it looked like a sister fight would break out any minute, Kaoruko said:

"Then, Momoka-chan, when you meet Yuri-chan, please tell her to drop by at the Botanical Garden as well."

"Of course. I will let you know how Yuri is doing when I come back."

"Thank you. Well, then."

Kaoruko was about to return to her workplace, leaving the arguing pair behind, when her cell phone began to vibrate inside her lab coat's pocket.

As she took out the phone to answer it, she was greeted by the voice of her granddaughter, Tsubomi:

"Hello, Grandma. We have just entered Kibougahana."

Hearing Tsubomi's voice through the device, she unintentionally let out an "Eh?", followed by a loud "Aahh!"

Momoka and Erika, still in the middle of their quarrel, looked in her direction as she exclaimed.

Flustered, Kaoruko turned away from them.

"Grandma, you didn't forget that we were moving today, right?"

Kaoruko's thoughts were so preoccupied with Yuri that she has indeed forgotten about Tsubomi and her parents, who were supposed to move into her house today.

"O-Of course not. In fact, I'm standing outside right now," she said quietly.

"That's right. You wouldn't forget about it, Grandma," Tsubomi replied, audibly relieved.

Kaoruko glanced at the building in front of her, apologising in her heart, and convincing herself that she wasn't *actually* lying. Outside the neighbouring house, she saw Erika staring at her curiously, while Momoka dragged her back inside the shop by the ear. Kaoruko chuckled before picking up her conversation with Tsubomi again:

"The movers left earlier than you, right?"

"Yes. They left about 30 minutes before us, so I think they should be arriving soon."

"I see..." At that moment, the movers' truck pulled up in front of the house. "Oh, they have just arrived. I'll hang up now."

Kaoruko put away her phone, greeted the movers, and brought in the luggages.

Once that was done, she called the Botanical Garden to tell them she would take off the rest of the day.

While waiting for Tsubomi and her parents to arrive, Kaoruko recalled the time when she herself had moved to Kibougahana three years ago.

It happened when Kaoruko was appointed as head of the Botanical Garden. Before that, during her time as vice-head, she would commute from her old home in Kamakura. However, being over 60 years old, she found the commute on a crowded train tiring, so she rented a house, and started to live there alone. Being a grandma's girl, this made Tsubomi cry, but Kaoruko felt like this could be a good experience for her granddaughter as well.

Tsubomi's father, Hanasaki Youichi – probably by Kaoruko's influence –, was a botanist, who used to give lectures at his former university in Tokyo, while also partaking in activities involving the protection of endangered plant species. Her mother, Mizuki, was a career woman at a well-known flower trading company. The two of them were often away from home because of their work, which left Tsubomi lonely. Until then, Kaoruko was the one who looked after her the most, but when her parents realised how reserved she became and how out-of-place she felt at school, they decided to quit their jobs for good and open a flower shop near their old home in Kamakura. That happened three years ago, around the same time when Kaoruko became head of the Botanical Garden.

Kaoruko thought that if the three of them lived together by themselves, it would strengthen their weakened family bond, and Tsubomi's behaviour could gradually change as well, which is why she decided to move to Kibougahana City alone.

Then, this New Year, Kaoruko's landlord offered to sell her the house she was renting, and after consulting with her son, Youichi, they decided to move here from Kamakura and start living together as a family of four again.

The renovations started immediately so that the flower shop could open, with the work being completed three days ago.

As Kaoruko was reminiscing these memories, a minivan pulled up behind the truck, and opening the rear door, a girl with glasses and a ponytail jumped out of it. She was Kaoruko's granddaughter, Tsubomi.

“Grandma!”

“Tsubomi, welcome to Kibougahana!”

Kaoruko opened her arms, hugging Tsubomi with all her might, as she leapt out of the car.

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In the evening, as the four of them were eating together again for the first time in a while, having some soba to celebrate their moving in, Kaoruko heard the bell ring at the back door.

Tsubomi was about to stand up, but Kaoruko seated her back.

“It's okay, Tsubomi, I'll answer it. It should be a visitor for me. Just eat.”

“Alright, I understand. Then, if you insist...”

Tsubomi's polite way of speaking goes back to elementary school. It began with an advice from Kaoruko to speak politely if she wanted to become a good wife, since the other kids in the neighbourhood had picked up really poor language, probably from the TV. Tsubomi's use of words became refined afterwards, even overly so.

Kaoruko once warned her that being too polite makes it just as difficult to have natural conversations with friends, but Tsubomi said that she liked to talk politely, so it stuck with her.

*She must have got that strong will from her late grandfather,* Kaoruko thought while smiling, walking towards the back door.

As she expected, her visitor was Momoka.

She informed Kaoruko that she has parted with Yuri just now; she wasn't as depressed as Momoka had expected, and said she would go to school from the day after tomorrow.

"And did Yuri-chan tell you why she was feeling down?"

"It was something I didn't expect. Apparently it was because her boyfriend moved to somewhere far away..."

"I see..."

Of course, Kaoruko knew the real reason was Cologne's death, but since there was no way she could tell Momoka about that, she kept quiet.

"I didn't even know she had a boyfriend, so it was quite the shock... Does Yuri not think of me as her best friend after all?"

"I don't think that's the case. I always hear a lot about you from her, Momoka-chan."

"Really? I wish she was more open with me, though."

"Fufu. Well, I'm relieved that she's well enough to go to school at least."

"When I told her that you were worried about her, Yuri said she would also visit you at the Botanical Garden when she feels a bit better. Well then, I will take my leave now."

"I'm really grateful," Kaoruko said, to which Momoka bowed with a smile, turned around, and headed back towards her own house.

Kaoruko was about to come back inside, when she noticed that Tsubomi was peeking over from the dining room.

“Oh, Tsubomi, if you were there, you could have come say hello to Momoka-chan.”

“Ah, sorry, she was just so beautiful that I couldn’t stop staring at her. I didn’t know you had such a pretty acquaintance, Grandma...”

“Her family owns the fashion store next door. Her name is Momoka-chan. She’s a high school student, and also works as a model.”

“Oh, is that so? I realised she was different from me. She had such an aura, or charisma about her.”

Kaoruko smiled, putting an arm around Tsubomi’s shoulder. They went back to the dining room, and returning to her soba, Kaoruko continued the conversation:

“Momoka-chan has a younger sister who is just the same age as you, Tsubomi.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“Her name is Erika-chan. She’s a very lively young lady, completely different from her older sister. She’s a second-year at Myoudou Academy’s middle school.”

“That’s the same school I will be attending as well, right?”

“Indeed. I think if you become friends with her, it might help you get accustomed to life easier here.”

“Alright. But would she want to be friends with me?”

Youichi and Mizuki, who were listening to them with a smile, joined the conversation:

“Hey now, Tsubomi, don’t be so negative.”

“That’s right. Didn’t you say you wanted to change?”

“Change?” Kaoruko asked, to which Tsubomi replied shyly:

“I decided to change from being reserved, like I was in my old school, and talk more confidently and make friends...”

“I see, so that’s what you mean by ‘change’.”

“Yes.”



“In that case, becoming friends with Erika-chan would be a good start.”

“Alright. I will do my best!” Tsubomi clenched her fists tightly.

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The next day, Tsubomi’s parents were so preoccupied with arranging their belongings and meeting with the flower shop suppliers that by the time they could take Tsubomi over to the neighbouring Kurumi house to greet them, it was already afternoon.

Unfortunately, Momoka was away for her modelling job, and Erika for some personal programme. After briefly saying hello to the sisters’ parents, the three of them returned home.

Tsubomi was planning to help her parents, who were busy with preparing for the opening tomorrow, but after Kaoruko called her, she decided to check out the Botanical Garden instead.

The sakura trees in the Botanical Garden were already past full bloom, and more and more of them could be seen with fallen petals.

Even though Kaoruko has been living in Kibougahana for a while, Tsubomi has never been to the Botanical Garden.

Kaoruko gave her a thorough guide around the greenhouse, which was home to some of the rarest plants in the world. Among them, the one that caught Tsubomi’s eye the most was a plant called *Agave americana*. Its Japanese name, *ryuuzetsuran* means ‘dragon tongue orchid.’ It originates from Mexico, but can be found in the wilderness all over Central and South America.

Despite being called an ‘orchid’ in Japanese, it looks more similar to the Africa-native aloe. Because of its slow growth, it is said to bloom only once every few decades.

Kaoruko told her that she has been growing it ever since she first came to this Botanical Garden, and because the stalk had already started to grow, it would be this year that it would bloom and wither away.

“I wonder what its flowers are going to look like!”

“I’ve only seen pictures about it on the internet too. There are more than 200 species, so we won’t know until it actually blooms.”

“I’m so excited about it! Grandma, please make sure to tell me when it blooms.”

“Of course. You will be the first one to know, Tsubomi.”

“Thank you so much!”

“Fufu, you really are a flower enthusiast, Tsubomi.”

“Yes. That’s because I grew up seeing the lavender fields you planted with Grandpa.”

Kaoruko caressed Tsubomi’s head as she smiled cheerfully, then took her to a very special location.

The place was on the top of a hill about 15 minutes from the Botanical Garden.

“Wow, it’s amazing!”

The hilltop overlooked the entire city. Even the sea could be seen in the distance, making it an excellent viewing spot, and the sight impressed Tsubomi so much that it ended up becoming her favourite place in Kibougahana.

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It was the following morning that Tsukikage Yuri saw Tsubomi for the first time.

Since Myoudou Academy’s middle and high schools were located next to each other, the tree-lined street leading up to the school gate was overflowing with students from both schools at the start of the new term, some of them being new students.

On the side of the path ahead, there was a girl wearing the middle school uniform crouching down and looking at the clovers – Tsubomi.

“I found one! The meaning of four-leaf clovers in the language of flowers is ‘happiness’...” she mumbled, staring at the four-leaf clover as it moved in the light breeze.

*Mr. Four-leaf Clover, I want to change my withdrawn personality. Please, help me fulfil... wait, no, I cannot depend on someone else for that. I will definitely show you I can change!*, promising to herself, Tsubomi stood up and declared:

“I will do my best! Yeahh!!” As she raised her right fist in the air, the students walking past behind her giggled. Tsubomi instantly turned red in the face. “Or maybe not,” she squealed, darting away towards the school gate as if escaping.

Momoka, who watched the scene with amusement, said to Yuri:

“I’ve never seen her around before. Perhaps she’s a freshman in the middle school?”

“I think she’s a bit older than that...”

“Then maybe a transfer student? Hey, come to think of it, Mama told me that our new neighbours have a daughter who’s the same age as my sister.”

“Oh, Erika-chan... right?”

“Yep. Looks like that girl will also attend this middle school. I’d feel sorry for her if she ended up in Erika’s class, though.”

“Why?”

“She’s pretty bad at reading the atmosphere, or I should say, she instantly forces her ways on other people.”

“Oh, I see!” Yuri chuckled.

Momoka was worried about Yuri being so gloomy two days ago when they went shopping, but after finally seeing her smile, she also smiled in relief.

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Momoka’s prediction was right on point.

Tsubomi and Erika both got into class 2-2, and the homeroom teacher, Tsurusaki-sensei asked Tsubomi to introduce herself.

She began by writing her name on the board, but being too nervous, her letters came out too small, and she didn’t quite succeed.

“It’s way too small, I can’t read it.”

That remark was made by none other than Erika. Tsubomi’s motivation of trying to change herself was taken away, and not being able to introduce herself as she planned, she became disheartened.

Nevertheless, her classmates gave her a warm welcome, and she was put to ease.

During lunch break, two of those classmates, Sakuma Toshiko and Sawai Naomi invited Tsubomi to eat lunch together.

The three of them sat on the grass in the courtyard, and while eating, Tsubomi was talking about Kamakura, the place she used to live before, when suddenly Erika appeared.

“So that’s where you were eating.” Upon squeezing herself next to Tsubomi, she immediately discovered that she had a piece of karaage chicken left. “Oh, karaage! I’ll trade you my tamagoyaki for it.”

Putting her tamagoyaki in Tsubomi’s lunchbox, Erika picked up the chicken with her chopsticks.

“Ah!” Tsubomi gasped in surprise, then said quietly, “I was saving that for last...”

Erika replied absent-mindedly, while looking at her:

“Hm? Did you just say something?”

“Erm, ah, no...”

Completely oblivious to Tsubomi’s disappointment, Erika bit into the karaage.

“Yummy!”

“Ah...”

Only when Tsubomi’s eyes were starting to well up did Erika finally notice herself.

“Huh? Tsubomi, you were the type who eats her favourite last? Sorry, I’ll give it back.”

“Ah, no, it’s fine...”

“Guess so, I already bit into it,” and with that, Erika tossed the remaining half into her mouth. At that moment, Toshiko and Naomi burst out laughing.

“Hanasaki-san, Erika has her own understanding of the world, so you need to be blunt with her,” Toshiko pointed out.

“O-Okay...” Tsubomi nodded, although she was disappointed in herself for not being able to change this time either.

“What are you saying? I just communicate in my own way!” Erika objected, but was retorted by Naomi:

“That’s what she meant by ‘your own understanding’!”

“Huuh?”

As she looked at Erika tilting her head in confusion, Tsubomi thought there was no way she could ever befriend such a person. But Erika had other ideas.

After school, the remaining two members of the fashion club, of which Erika herself was the president of, quitted, making it uncertain whether the club would be able to continue at all, so she tried to recruit Tsubomi into joining.

However, since Tsubomi liked flowers, she was planning to join the gardening club, and she declined.

“Doesn’t your family run a flower shop? At least in school, forget about flowers! Come join the fashion club!” Erika said, grabbing Tsubomi’s hand by force. “It’s gonna be fun! You’re a girl, no way you’re not interested in fashion!”

She tried to drag Tsubomi to the clubroom, but Tsubomi shook off her hand, saying:

“I like *flowers*! Please, don’t decide for me!”

Her reaction came off so strong that even Erika was left completely speechless afterwards.

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However, as Tsubomi was going home from school, she noticed that Erika was following her from behind with a downcast expression on her face.

*I turned her down already... and she’s still following me.*

Tsubomi stopped, and with great determination, spoke out:

“Kurumi-san!”

Hearing her voice, Erika also came into a halt and lifted her head.

“Just Erika is fine.”

“Ah... Then, Erika...-san, why are you following me? No matter how many times you ask, I will not join the...”

Suddenly, Erika pointed in front of her, saying:

“My house is this way.”

“Aah... I see.”

Tsubomi had no choice but to continue her way alongside Erika.

However, even after turning at the crossroad right before their house, Erika still didn't part from her.

“Eh? It's still the same way?” she asked, when Erika pointed at the fashion store called Fairy Drop by the corner and said:

“That's my house.”

At that moment, Tsubomi cried out in shock:

“Whaaat?!”

“Huh, why the surprise?” as Erika looked at her in wonder, Tsubomi's mother, Mizuki, who was watering the potted plants in front of the neighbouring flower shop, noticed them and called out:

“Welcome home, Tsubomi.”

“Ah, I'm home.”

This time, it was Erika's turn to raise her voice in surprise at Tsubomi's words:

“No waaaay!! We are neighbours, Tsubomi?”

“... Looks like it.”

Then, suddenly grabbing Tsubomi by the hand, Erika rushed over to Mizuki.

“Nice to meet you. I am the daughter of the store owners next door, my name is...”

Mizuki smiled and finished her sentence:

“Erika-chan, right? Your mom told me about you.”

Erika let go of Tsubomi's hand.

“Really?! Oba-san, we are classmates with Tsubomi!” Erika said, to which Mizuki looked at Tsubomi, saying:

“Is that so? Isn’t that great, Tsubomi?”

Tsubomi couldn’t possibly say it was not, considering the person in question stood right in front of her.

“Y-Yeah...”

Her answer was not convincing, but at that moment, Erika grabbed her wrist again.

“Oba-san, let me borrow Tsubomi for a bit.”

“Sure.”

Receiving Mizuki’s permission, Erika widely grinned.

“Let’s go, Tsubomi!”

“Go where?”

“To my place!” By force, Erika began to pull her towards their store. “To think even our houses were next to each other! It must be fate or something.”

“It’s a mere coincidence!” Tsubomi freed her hand from Erika’s grip. “Sorry, but I still have some things to do now, so please, excuse me!” declaring so, she turned her back on her, and while Erika couldn’t see, she made a fist pump, whispering to herself. “I firmly refused her. Maybe I have managed to change this time...”

However, unfortunately for her, Erika heard her voice loud and clear.

“Huuh, so you want to change!” Startled, Tsubomi turned around. “If that’s the case, you could have said so! I know just the thing that will change you!”

Grabbing Tsubomi’s wrist once again, Erika dashed into the store without even waiting for her answer.

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The second floor of Fairy Drop was divided into a combined design and dressing room for Erika's mother, Sakura, and a private studio belonging to her father, Ryuunosuke.

Tsubomi was made to stand in front of a giant mirror in the former area. In response to her wish of wanting to change, Erika swiftly removed her round glasses, untied her ponytail, and remade her hair into slightly wavy twintails. Then, she proceeded to coordinate an outfit that would look good on her. After several minutes of clothes picking, she held up the best-fitting one over Tsubomi's school uniform: a pink one-piece with a big ribbon on the chest.

Seeing Tsubomi's reflection in the mirror, Erika nodded in approval.

"What do you think? You look like a popular girl now, right?!" she said, handing Tsubomi her glasses.

Tsubomi put them back on, and looked at herself in the mirror.

"I-Is this really me...?" She was really fascinated; as if she were a different person, like some model from a fashion magazine. However, she quickly came to her senses, and shook her head violently. "Enough of this already!"

"Huh?"

"What I want to change is my personality... not my looks! We are not even friends, so please, stop doing things I didn't ask for!"

Pushing it into her hands, Tsubomi returned the one-piece to Erika, and ran down the stairs to get away from her.

"Tsubomi... W-What's up with you, at least you could thank..." Erika was about to say, when she heard someone's voice from behind:

"The one at fault here was you."

When she turned around, she saw Momoka standing there.

"Momo-nee...!"

"You have a really bad habit of forcing your ways on other people, you know."

Erika was taken aback; Momoka really hit the nail on the head.

"This has nothing to do with you, Momo-nee! Leave me alone!"

Furiously, she passed by her sister, and headed inside the living quarters.



“You just can’t admit it, huh,” Momoka smirked.

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As she entered her room, Erika threw herself on the bed and rolled onto her back.

Momoka’s words kept repeating inside her head.

“Well, I’m sorry for not admitting it! Easy for you, being beautiful, working as a model while still in high school, and being popular. And meanwhile, I’m just... Aaaahh!”

Scratching her hair with both hands, Erika got up and looked out of the window.

When she did so, she saw Tsubomi on the veranda of the neighbouring house as she was watering the flowers in the planters, her glasses on, and her hair still left in the style Erika did for her.

“Ah,” Erika let out a quiet sound of surprise. Noticing that Erika was looking in her direction, Tsubomi put down the watering can, and went back inside her room, even closing the curtains.

“...”

Realising that Tsubomi was still mad at her, Erika flopped onto the bed once again.

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Tsubomi sat down on her bed, picked up a potted cactus from her bedside table, and started to speak to it:

“Maybe I overreacted a little... But it wasn’t my fault, right?” Tsubomi let out a small sigh, then putting back the cactus to its place, lay down on the bed. “I guess you can’t just change your entire personality overnight...”

The exhaustion after her first day at school must have caught up to her, as she fell asleep right on the spot.

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Tsubomi had a dream.

It was a recurring dream she had been seeing lately about a female fighter called Cure Moonlight being attacked and defeated by another, evil warrior called Dark Precure and a masked man named Professor Sabaaku, in front of a large tree, the “Great Heart Tree.”

Just like always, she woke up at the part where Dark Precure delivered the final blow to Cure Moonlight, who began to scream.

“The same dream again... I wonder if it means something...”

Hoping Kaoruko’s wisdom would help her figure it out if she talked to her, Tsubomi decided to head towards the Botanical Garden.

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Unfortunately however, Kaoruko had a meeting to attend with her co-workers soon.

“I’m sorry, Tsubomi. Is it alright if you wait about an hour? Or is it something urgent?”

“Ah... It’s not that important, just a dream I have been seeing recently and wanted to get some guidance about it. Please, go ahead to the meeting. I will wait.”

“Alright. Sorry then,” Kaoruko said, then left in a hurry.

While waiting for Kaoruko, Tsubomi went up to the hill overlooking the city to pass the time.

Arriving at the top, she stretched herself, while admiring the view of the city, when suddenly, two small silhouettes came tumbling down from the sky.

They were none other than the two fairies, Chypre and Coffret.

“Huhh?!” The astonished Tsubomi tried to dodge away, but it was too late, and the fairies crashed right into her. “Ouch, that hurt... Wh-What are these?!” Tsubomi shrieked, looking at the creatures.

The fairies immediately snapped out of their woozy state.

“Bad guys are chasing us~!”

“Please, help!”

“T-Talking plushies?!”

Tsubomi began to back away while still on her bottom.

“No time to explain!”

“Hide us~!”

Thus, Chypre and Coffret jumped into Tsubomi’s sweatshirt through its neck.

“W-W-What are you doing?! Stop it, that tickles!”

As Tsubomi grabbed the bulge on her shirt, she heard them speak from the inside:

“By the way, I am Chypre~.”

“I am Coffret. Nice to meet you.”

“My name is Hanasaki Tsubomi... Wait, it’s not really the time for introductions, I guess...”  
Tsubomi was about to say, when the two of them spoke again:

“Shhh~!”

“Sasorina is coming!”

“Who?” Turning around, Tsubomi could see Sasorina approaching with quick steps. “W-Who is that creepy-looking woman?” she asked in fear, but the fairies remained silent.

Sasorina stopped in front of Tsubomi, and asked:

“Hey, little girl, haven’t you seen two fairies fly by just now~?”

Tsubomi shook her head, trembling.

Not knowing the fairies were hiding in there, Sasorina stared at Tsubomi’s “big bust”, then with a “tch!”, she went back down the hill.

Tsubomi sighed in relief, and the fairies stuck out their faces from the sweatshirt’s neck as well.

“It’s safe now~. Thank you~.”

“Who on earth was that frightening woman just now?”

“A member of the Desert Apostles...” Chypre began to explain, but Coffret intervened:

“Even if we tried to explain, it would be just nonsense to Tsubomi. Let’s hurry to the Botanical Garden instead.”

“You mean the Botanical Garden of Kibougahana?”

“Well, yes...”

“Actually, I’m on my way there as well.”

The fairies looked at each other, then smiled in agreement.

“Then, we’ll have you take us there~.”

“Please.”

“Okay. But the scary woman also went in that direction...”

“It’s fine, we’ll hide.”

“Tsubomi, let’s go~.”

Tsubomi, kind as she was, took the fairies with her as she descended the hill.

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The three of them reached the playground at the foot of the hill, when Tsubomi saw Erika there, leaning against the horizontal bar, thinking about something. She was holding an eco-bag in her right hand, so she must have been in the middle of shopping.

But before Tsubomi could approach her, Sasorina appeared in front of Erika.

“Hey, little girl, haven’t you seen two fairies around~?”

“Who are you? Weirdo woman.”

That single nonchalant remark from Erika had Sasorina infuriated.

“What did you say?!”

The next moment, Sasorina's eyes lit up with a mysterious glow.

She sensed Erika's Heart Flower, a white cyclamen, wilting, with its petals already starting to turn red.

"What a perfectly wilting Heart Flower you have there. Heart Flower, come on out~!" she shouted, stretching out her hands towards Erika.

At that moment, several streaks of light emanated from the ground under Erika's feet. Erika began to scream, her body disappearing with a flash of light, soon to be replaced by an upside-down octagonal pyramid crystal and a crystal sphere attached to its tip, which floated over to Sasorina.

"Erika-san...?!"

The fairies went on to explain the situation to the horrified Tsubomi:

"She took out her Heart Flower."

"If she doesn't get it back soon, her white cyclamen flower will turn red and eventually die~."

Tsubomi had no idea what they were talking about.

In the meanwhile, Sasorina noticed the doll of a little girl lying near the bushes, and tossing away the spherical part of the crystal, she said:

"This will do~. Your turn now, Desertrian~!" Fusing the octagonal pyramid crystal and the doll, Sasorina created the Desertrian: a giant version of the doll. "Now go on a rampage to lure out those fairies~!"

The Desertrian let out a roar, and, in its frenzy, began to break the playground equipment.

Coffret took that chance to pick up the crystal sphere that had fallen on the ground, and showed it to Tsubomi.

Inside the sphere, she saw a shrunken version of Erika in a sitting position, unconscious. Her expression reflected distress.

"Hang in there, Erika-san!" Tsubomi shook the sphere, but received no reply.

"Unless the Desertrian is defeated and her Heart Flower is retrieved, she will not regain her consciousness~," Chypre said, when Sasorina suddenly heard her voice.

“There you are, fairies~! Desertrian, go get them~!”

With a roar, the Desertrian charged at Tsubomi and the fairies.

“Let’s run!”

In their desperate attempt at escaping from the Desertrian’s attacks, Tsubomi and the fairies managed to hide inside a clay pipe.

The Desertrian ripped the board off from a nearby seesaw, and tried to smash the pipe with it. However, the board broke, and it was forced to continue the assault with its hands.

Whenever it struck down, the inside of the pipe echoed loudly, making Tsubomi shudder.

As the Desertrian was delivering the hits, it began to shout:

“I hate you, Momo-nee! Don’t be so full of yourself just because you’re a little pretty and have a good figure!”

This caught Tsubomi by surprise, and turned to the fairies:

“What is this creature talking about?!”

“It’s the cry of that girl’s heart whose Heart Flower was stolen~,” Chypre answered, pointing to Erika inside the crystal sphere, whose face was contorting in anguish.

“Erika-san...!” Tsubomi muttered, when the clay pipe began to crack under the Desertrian’s swings.

“Momo-nee just breathes and people go crazy over her, meanwhile I have to go out of my way just so my friends won’t hate me!”

Hearing the Desertrian voicing Erika’s inner cries, Tsubomi realised she had misunderstood her.

“So Erika-san also has her own problems...”

At that moment, Coffret noticed the clay pipe breaking apart.

“It’s not safe here anymore! We have to run!”

The moment the three got out of the pipe, it was crushed down by the Desertrian’s attacks.

“If we don’t do something, the petals of her Heart Flower will fall, and the Great Heart Tree will wither~.”

Chypre’s words made Tsubomi gasp in surprise. She mentioned something Tsubomi often heard in that dream.

“By the Great Heart Tree, do you perhaps mean a giant tree?”

“You know about the Great Heart Tree?”

“I often see it in a dream.”

The fairies’ eyes widened in surprise.

“A dream?! I-It can’t be that...”

“This girl?!”

Just then, the Desertrian let out a roar and threw a punch at them.

The three of them managed to evade it and flee just in the nick of time, only for Sasorina to block their way of escape.

“Fufufufu, no more running away~. Now, hand over your Heart Perfumes this instant~!”

However, the Desertrian stopped attacking, and began to claw at its head instead.

“Papa and Mama never scold Momo-nee either, why am I the only one who gets reprimanded?! It’s not fair!”

“Hey, you! Stop saying nonsense, and catch those two instead~!”

Sasorina’s words made Tsubomi’s shoulders tremble with anger.

“Exploiting Erika-san’s troubles to let this monster go on such a rampage is just cruel! I... have had enough of this!”

The moment she blurted that out, the heart mark on Chypre’s chest began to shine.

“This means...! I can entrust it to her~!”

Chypre summoned her Heart Perfume from the heart mark, and gave it to Tsubomi.

“W-What is this?”

“A Heart Perfume which can turn you into a Precure~.”

“A Precure?!”

Tsubomi was taken aback upon hearing a term from her dream again.

“I will take care of your friend until then!” Coffret took the sphere from Tsubomi with Erika inside.

“Go, Precure Seed!” The heart mark on Chypre’s chest glowed up, and a Precure Seed sprang out of it.

Tsubomi’s hand moved on its own as she grabbed the Seed and set it inside the Heart Perfume.

“Huh? Huh? What is happening?”

“There’s no time to explain~. Just shout ‘Precure! Open My Heart~!’”

“W-Whaaat?!”

“Just do it already~!”

“Okay, I have no idea what’s going on, but... Precure! Open My Heart!”

In that instant, the Heart Perfume began to shine, and as Tsubomi’s body got wrapped in light with it, a white dress appeared on her.

Even Sasorina’s jaw dropped.

“I-Is this for real...?!”

The Heart Perfume started to move by itself, spraying its holy fragrance over Tsubomi’s body, materialising as a pink-coloured Precure costume on her.

“The flower blooming from the earth... Cure... wait, what am I even saying?!”

“Announce how you want to be called~!”

“As if it were so simple...” Looking around, she noticed that the late-blooming double-flowered cherry blossoms in the park were still in full bloom. “That’s it! The flower blooming from the earth... Cure Blossom!” Tsubomi declared, finishing with a stylish pose.



“Amazing~! So she really was a Precure~!”

“I am... a Precure?!”

Transforming into Cure Blossom made Tsubomi amazed and bewildered. At the sudden appearance of a Precure, Sasorina also raised her voice in shock:

“A... A new Precure...?! In this case, Desertrian! Beat them all up, together with the Precure~!”

Howling, the Desertrian raised one of its legs in an attempt to crush the trio under its feet.

Just before that could happen, Cure Blossom jumped away with the fairies in her arms to avoid it.

However, she didn't expect her jumping abilities as a Precure would be so extreme to end up more than 50 metres up in the sky.

“Eehhh, w-w-why on earth can I jump so hiiigh?!”

“Because you turned into a Precure~!”

Chypre's reasoning still didn't make sense to Cure Blossom, and the moment she looked down, she cried out:

“I-I'm afraid of heeeights!”

Stopping in mid-air, Cure Blossom began to flail with her limbs, but as she had no way to win against the gravitational force, she started to plummet headlong towards the ground.

As she fell, she let out a scream, and crashed into the ground, sending a cloud of dust rising up.

As the dust cleared, it revealed Cure Blossom, lying there in a daze, collapsed.

Chypre and Coffret watched her from above, dumbfounded.

“Are you sure it was a good idea to make this girl into a Precure?” Coffret asked Chypre.

“Ugh...” Chypre didn't reply, but she could feel the sweats of embarrassment appearing on her body.

At that moment, the Desertrian approached the unconscious Cure Blossom with a smile on its face, trying to catch her.

“Cure Blossom! Run~!”

Upon hearing Chypre’s voice, Cure Blossom suddenly came to her senses, and took off in a panic. However, the superhuman speed made her scream out:

“Uwaaah, too faaast!” As she looked back, the silhouette of the Desertrian chasing after her suddenly seemed smaller. “I can get away like this!”

An expression of relief finally passed over her face, but the fairies caught up immediately, and said:

“You can’t run away! Wait, look ahead, ahead!”

“Huh?” Cure Blossom looked forward, and saw the jungle gym looming in front of her. “Uwaaaaah!!”

She tried to stop, but in vain; as she crashed into it, she left an indenture after her on the iron toy.

“Ow-ow-ouch... Ah, the children’s jungle gym!”

Cure Blossom began to fix the iron bars one by one that got bent like they were nothing.

“There’s no time for that~! Behind you!”

The Desertrian caught up, and delivered a punch at her.

“Hyaaahh!”

Cure Blossom managed to jump to the side, but this time, the horizontal bar came into view.

She caught the handle with both hands immediately, but as she came with too great of an impulse, she ended up doing a giant swing.

*I thought I couldn’t even do a back hip circle!*

Her eyes began to spin, accidentally letting go of the iron bar. Her body drew a parabola in the air as it was sent flying, and upon landing, she got knocked out.

Chypre and Coffret flew over to her in a hurry.

“Pull yourself together~!”

“Open your eyes.”

They shook her body and lightly patted her cheeks, but she remained there motionless.

Seeing her in such a sorry state, Sasorina mockingly laughed at her.

“This is the legendary warrior, Precure? Just how pathetic is that~?”

At that moment, Cure Blossom finally regained her consciousness.

“What happened to my body? I gained so much strength that I lost control over it...”

“Ahahahah! Desertrian, here’s your chance, attack~!”

The Desertrian began to charge at them anew, roaring.

“Hyaaaah!”

As Cure Blossom was about to escape, the fairies pulled her by the skirt with all their might to stop her.

“You can’t keep running away~!”

“You’re a Precure, you have to fight~!”

“L-Let me goo! You’ll pull off my skirt!” she begged the fairies with teary eyes.

Reluctantly, the fairies let go of her, and she fell on her face with a “Wah!”.

“What an idiot. She’s just got to be the weakest Precure in history~,” Sasorina said, as she kept making fun of her.

In the meanwhile, the Desertrian started to attack, assaulting Cure Blossom with powerful punches.

She bent down immediately to avoid it, and fled once again.

The Desertrian began to chase after her, while throwing a series of strikes at her, but she managed to dodge them with her constant running around.

She was starting to get on Sasorina’s nerves.

“Heey! Stop jumping about!”

Transforming her own hair into a long braid, she extended it towards Cure Blossom with a swift movement, wrapping it around her legs.

“Aah!”

With a pull of her hair, Sasorina slammed Blossom to the ground.

“Kyaah!” Cure Blossom screamed, when the Desertrian came rushing towards her, trapping her in its grip. As it squeezed her torso with its enormous strength, she lost her breath, and her expression contorted in pain.

“Cure Blossom!!” the fairies cried out in despair.

“Desertrian, crush her at once~!” Sasorina ordered.

All of a sudden, a whirlwind arose, bringing several rose petals with itself, concealing Cure Blossom and the Desertrian from view.

The next thing Sasorina noticed, the Desertrian tumbled in front of her, shrieking.

“W-What the?!” Sasorina cried out in surprise, when the rose tornado dispersed, revealing a young man in its place with Cure Blossom in his arms. It was Coupe in the Taishou-era shosei uniform he wore when he came to Cure Moonlight’s rescue as well.

Unaware of his identity, Cure Blossom looked up at his face with amazement, blushing, then passed out in his arms.

“T-That’s...!”

“How cool!”

The fairies began to squeal happily, soon joined by Sasorina:

“Oh my, a hot guy! ...I mean, who the hell are you~?!”

The Desertrian bellowed in anger, pounding its chest like a gorilla, and attacked Coupe as he stood there in the form of a young man.

Coupe swiftly jumped away with Cure Blossom in his arms, landing on the top of the jungle gym and suddenly raising his left index finger towards the sky.

When he did so, the whirlwind of roses appeared again, covering up their silhouettes.

After the whirlwind finally stopped, the two of them disappeared from sight.

“T-They’re gone?! What’s happening~?!” Sasorina and the Desertrian both surveyed the surroundings, but the young man was nowhere to be found, and even Chypre and Coffret were gone. “Oh boy, even the fairies got away~! Desertrian, we have to find them no matter what~!”

The pair took off towards the Botanical Garden.

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When Tsubomi woke up after her Precure transformation got undone, she found herself on a thick tree stump inside the Botanical Garden’s Plush Toy Hall.

Her grandmother, Hanasaki Kaoruko was gently caressing her head.

“Looks like you’re finally awake,” Kaoruko said to her, and Tsubomi sat up in surprise.

“Grandma...?!” As she looked around, she spotted the giant stuffed animal, Coupe, standing right next to her, with that spaced-out expression of his. “Huh? How did I even get here?”

“I found you passed out here when I entered the greenhouse,” Kaoruko replied, oblivious to the fact that Tsubomi had turned into Cure Blossom.

At that moment, Chypre and Coffret dashed into the greenhouse.

“There you are~!”

“Ah! It’s Cure Flower!”

The fairies clung onto Kaoruko.

“Chypre, Coffret, long time no see,” Kaoruko smiled widely, hugging them.

“Eh? Huhh? Grandma, you know these two?”

“I do.”

“It sounded like they just called you Cure Flower...”

“Actually, I used to be a Precure in the past.”

“R-Really, Grandma?!”

“Indeed. Coupe?” Kaoruko looked over at Coupe, when suddenly...

“Ah, the legendary fairy...”

“Coupe-sama~!”

The two fairies leapt in front of Coupe, cuddling up to him and beginning to rub their cheeks against his.

“The legendary fairy, Coupe-sama?”

“Coupe was my partner back when I was a Precure. He’s a big senpai fairy to Chypre and Coffret.”

Even as the fairies were rubbing their cheeks against him, Coupe remained expressionless, continuing to space out.

“He’s a fairy? He doesn’t look like one at all...”

“He’s so cool~.”

“I want to hurry up and become like Coupe-sama too!”

Tsubomi’s jaw dropped when she heard them say such strange things.

“W-What’s so cool about him?” she said, causing the fairies to send her intense glares.

“That was rude, Tsubomi~!”

“Coupe-sama is an idol to us fairies! The weakest Precure in history has no right to talk about him like that!”

Kaoruko’s expression stiffened as she was listening to their conversation.

“Wait a minute. Did you just say Tsubomi is a Precure...?”

Chypre flew over immediately.

“That’s right~! Tsubomi said she saw the Great Heart Tree in her dream, so I gave her my Heart Perfume...”

Coffret joined her by her side as well, saying:

“She successfully transformed into Cure Blossom.”

Once again, Kaoruko was taken aback.

“Tsubomi... Was your dream about Cure Moonlight getting defeated, perhaps?”

Tsubomi nodded.

“It keeps coming back so many times. That’s why I wanted to ask you about it, thinking you might figure out what it means, but then I met these two, and they made me into a Precure...”

“We were attacked by a Desertian and one of the Desert Apostles generals, Sasorina, who was chasing after us.”

“I see... I never thought Tsubomi might become a Precure.” Kaoruko looked troubled for a minute, but quickly put on a smile, and said: “Well, with her love of flowers, she is more than qualified for the task.”

“Hey, Grandma, what exactly is the Great Heart Tree?”

“The Great Heart Tree is the source of every Heart Flower.”

“The source of Heart Flowers?”

“Every individual has their own Heart Flower inside their hearts. Each Flower is of a different variety and colour, and no two are the same.”

“Do I also have a Heart Flower?”

“Of course you do. The Great Heart Tree is connected to Heart Flowers by an invisible force, so when a Heart Flower withers or discolours, the Great Heart Tree gets weakened as well.”

As she listened to Kaoruko’s explanation, Tsubomi remembered Erika’s Heart Flower.

“That’s right, the fairies said Erika-san’s Heart Flower has turned red...” Tsubomi suddenly gasped as she spoke. “I almost forgot! What happened to Erika-san?!”

“Don’t worry.”

The heart mark on Coffret’s chest glowed up, and the sphere containing Erika emerged from it, floating in mid-air.

As Kaoruko looked into the sphere, she saw Erika's body curled up in a foetal position with a look of agony on her face. Tsubomi examined it as well, and noticed that her expression appeared to be more painful than before.

"Poor girl... Her Heart Flower is starting to weaken."

"It's the work of Sasorina and the Desertrian~!" Chypre said angrily, when Coupe's face suddenly turned stern, and he looked towards the entrance.

Soon, screams could be heard from outside of the greenhouse.

"They are getting closer!" Coffret shouted. Tsubomi and Kaoruko looked at each other, then rushed outside.

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As they dashed out of the greenhouse, they were met by the screams of the Botanical Garden staff and the visitors who came to see the plants as they came running out of the other building, chased by the Desertrian.

Kaoruko turned to the crowd, shouting:

"I will hold it back, please hurry to the other side!"

The people nodded, and began to flee towards the street. The fairies watched them go at the entrance, then flew back over to Tsubomi and Kaoruko.

The Desertrian began to roar as it noticed the fairies, then suddenly, Sasorina appeared on the roof of the annex.

"Fufufuu, there you are, fairies~. Someone interrupted earlier, but this time, I won't let you get away~." She hopped off, landing by the Desertrian's side. "Come on, Desertrian! Beat them all to a pulp~."

The Desertrian howled, and began to approach them slowly, while voicing Erika's inner cries again:

"I just wanted to help Tsubomi become popular. But Momo-nee just had to...!"

Tsubomi looked at Erika's face of agony inside the sphere.

"Erika-san...!"



Chypre spoke, scrutinising the Desertrian as it drew closer:

“Her white cyclamen Heart Flower has almost turned completely red~.”

It was Kaoruko’s turn to speak up:

“White cyclamen means ‘innocence’ in the language of flowers. If it turns red, its meaning shifts to ‘jealousy.’”

Taken aback, Tsubomi asked:

“And what will happen afterwards?”

“Then it will simply wither away. And once it wilts, this girl will continue to sleep inside this sphere, with her heart stolen forever.”

Coffret’s words scared Tsubomi.

“I don’t want that...!”

“The only way to save your friend is to turn into a Precure and defeat the Desertrian, Tsubomi.”

“Come on, time to transform~!”

Tsubomi nodded firmly to Kaoruko and Chypre.

“Alright!” she agreed, only to notice that the key item, the Heart Perfume was missing. “Huh?! I can’t find that thing I sprayed on myself during the transformation!”

“W-Whaaat?!” Kaoruko and the fairies cried out in dismay, when the Desertrian caught up to them, and swung down its hand.

The group screamed, but managed to jump away just in time to evade it, then quickly rose to their feet.

However, the Desertrian didn’t stop its assaults, and in front of the Plush Toy Hall, it finally cornered them.

“Where did you leave the Heart Perfume~?”

“If only I knew...”

At that moment, a thick arm reached out from behind Tsubomi, and opened its clenched fist to reveal the Heart Perfume.

Tsubomi and the fairies turned around to see Coupe standing there.

“Coupe-sama!” the fairies rejoiced, as Coupe made a V sign, the usual blank stare on his face.

“Okay, Tsubomi! Now, transform!”

As a response to Kaoruko’s instruction, Tsubomi nodded with determination, grabbing the Heart Perfume at the ready.

“I am going to save Erika-san no matter what!”

Without delay, Chypre leapt in front of her, shouting:

“Go, Precure Seed!”

The heart mark on her chest glowed up, the Precure Seed sprang out of it, and Tsubomi took it to insert it in the Heart Perfume.

The holy light enveloped Tsubomi’s body, making a white dress appear on her.

“Precure! Open My Heart!” The Heart Perfume began to shine, and spraying its content on herself, Tsubomi transformed into a Precure. “The flower blooming from the earth... Cure Blossom!”

As soon as she took up her finishing pose, the Desertrian came delivering an axe kick to the top of her head.

Using both hands, Cure Blossom caught its leg, and putting all her strength into the move, she pushed back the Desertrian.

The Desertrian was blasted away, flew over the Botanical Garden’s flowerbeds, and crashed into the ground.

“What the hell are you doing~?! Show me some fighting spirit~!”

The Desertrian got to its feet, and charged forward furiously, trampling down the flowerbeds in the process.

“Those flowers were raised with care by the people of the Botanical Garden! I have had enough of this!”

Cure Blossom thrusted herself at the Desertrian, and a fierce exchange of blows began between them.

She dodged all the punches delivered at her with swift movements, then hit the Desertrian with a sharp roundhouse kick from behind. As the Desertrian staggered away in the midst of a wail, Cure Blossom unleashed a series of straight punches to its abdomen, finishing with a crisp uppercut. Unable to bear it any longer, the Desertrian stumbled backwards.

Cure Blossom stared at her fists agape at the strength of her own punches.

“It’s as if I have somehow become stronger...!”

“The desire to save your friend and those flowers increased your Precure abilities!”

In response to Kaoruko’s words, Cure Blossom exclaimed:

“I see!”

As she looked at her fists again, Coffret shouted at her:

“You can admire yourself later!”

“Oh, right!” Cure Blossom passed by the Desertrian as it was staggering to its feet, and jumped up in the air, yelling, “Taaaaaahh!”

She tried to attack with a dropkick, but Sasorina intervened:

“Like I will let you~!”

Without a minute’s delay, she extended her hair, wrapped it around Blossom’s body, and hurled her to the ground.

Then, she pointed the stinger at the end of her hair, which contained scorpion venom, towards the screaming Cure Blossom.

“Fufufu, just one sting, and you’re a goner~!”

Like a snake’s neck, Sasorina’s poisonous stinger crept towards Cure Blossom’s throat, but mustering up her strength, Blossom grabbed the upper part of the stinger with both hands, trying to break free from the braid tying down her arms.

“You, who tread on other people’s hearts, listen well! I am not going to back down!” she yelled, as she started to swing Sasorina by the hair, who began to scream, her eyes going

spinny. Then Cure Blossom let go of her, sending her flying to the sky with a huge impulse. Sasorina disappeared from sight.

“Now, that’s the strength of a Precure!” Coffret rejoiced, but Chypre kept her calm as she gave Cure Blossom the next order:

“Cure Blossom, now is your chance to defeat the Desertrian and retrieve her Heart Flower~!”

Cure Blossom glanced over at the Desertrian, as it was resting on one of its knees, breathing heavily.

“And how am I supposed to do that?”

“With the help of your Blossom Tact! Raise your right hand to the sky and call out ‘Gather, power of flowers! Blossom Tact!’”

Cure Blossom did as she was told, holding up her right hand and yelling:

“Gather, power of flowers! Blossom Tact!”

With that, she summoned the Tact from the emblem on her chest; its tip had a different colour than Cure Moonlight’s Moon Tact – it was pink. Chypre then continued:

“Now shout ‘Flowers, shine! Precure Pink Forte Wave!’, and swing it down at the Desertrian~!”

“Understood!” Cure Blossom readied her Tact. “Flowers, shine! Precure Pink Forte Wave!” she shouted, waving it towards the Desertrian. A powerful energy ball in the shape of a flower shot out from the end of the Tact, hitting the Desertrian in full, and enveloping its body with holy light, successfully capturing it.

“Spin the reel of the Tact with all you’ve got to purify it~!”

Following Chypre’s instructions, Cure Blossom began to spin the Tact with her left hand, while raising her voice to help her focus:

“Haaaaaaa!!”

The light surrounding the Desertrian shone even brighter, until the Desertrian turned into fragments of light itself; when they dissolved, the crystal containing Erika’s Heart Flower separated from the original form of the doll.

The doll dropped to the ground, and the crystal landed in Cure Blossom’s hands.

The previously reddened and wilting cyclamen inside the crystal turned white again.

“Now, let’s give this girl her Heart Flower back.”

Coffret held out the sphere with Erika inside, while Cure Blossom placed the octagonal pyramid on top of it.

As the two crystals became surrounded by holy light, Erika returned to her original form, but remained unconscious. Before she could fall over, Cure Blossom caught her in her arms.

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Erika was lying on the same stump where Tsubomi had been resting earlier, when she quietly opened her eyes.

“Where am I...?!”

As she sat up straight, she heard Tsubomi’s voice from behind:

“Inside the greenhouse of Grandma’s Botanical Garden.”

Erika turned around in surprise to find Tsubomi and Kaoruko standing there, smiling.

“What am I doing here?”

“We found you collapsed outside the park, so we brought you here,” Kaoruko answered.

“Oh, I see...”

Erika folded her arms, tilting her head to the side, pondering over something.

“Is there something wrong, Erika-san?”

“I had such a realistic dream while I was out. Somebody pulled out a flower from my body, which then possessed a doll, which then went on a rampage...”

“Huh?!” Tsubomi blurted out in astonishment.

“And a Cure Something girl showed up...”

“T-That was just...”

Kaoruko shook her head, silencing the bewildered Tsubomi. Tsubomi nodded, and Kaoruko started to chuckle:

“Fufu, what an amusing dream indeed.”

“Right?” Erika said, then slowly stood up, stepping in front of Tsubomi. “I’m sorry, Tsubomi. I really never think about what others want, and just push my ways on them without even realising. Unlike Momo-nee...”

Tsubomi felt delighted to hear this genuine apology from Erika.

“That’s not true. You helped me because you were thinking of *me* and my wish to change myself.”

“So you’re not mad at me?”

“No. By the way, Erika-san...”

“Stop with the ‘-san.’ Just Erika.”

“Then, Erika, how about I join the fashion club and you give this doll a makeover in exchange?”

Tsubomi held up the doll in her hands. While it was already dirty to begin with, it became even more battered after it turned into a Desertrian and started to wreak havoc.

“What! You’ll really join the fashion club?”

“If you don’t mind that I will also join the gardening club...”

“Thank you! Accept my big welcoome!” Overjoyed, Erika clung onto Tsubomi, then remembered the eco-bag she was holding in her right hand. “Oh, man! I was in the middle of shopping! Momo-nee will nag me agaain... Tsubomi, Tsubomi’s Granny, thanks for picking me up after I passed out! Well then...” she said, taking the doll from Tsubomi. “I’ll fix her up by tomorrow! Bye-bye!”

Waving her hand, Erika stormed out of the greenhouse.

Tsubomi and Kaoruko saw her off with a smile, and after Erika’s silhouette could no longer be seen, Chypre and Coffret came out of their hiding place in Coupe’s chest, who had been standing in the background.

“Hip hip hooray~! ...Ah!” Suddenly, Chypre started to wiggle her bottom. “Puri-puri-puri...”

“A Heart Seed is going to be born!”

The heart mark glowed up on Coffret’s chest, and he summoned the Heart Pot.

With a “Puririn~!”, the Heart Seed came out of Chypre’s bottom.

Coffret took it, opened the lid of the Heart Pot, and put it inside. Then, he turned the handle around, and the Seed dropped into the Pot with a tinkle.

“What is that?” Tsubomi asked, to which Kaoruko replied:

“A Heart Seed. It was born because you purified Erika-chan’s Heart Flower. When the Heart Pot here gets filled with lots of Heart Seeds, the Great Heart Tree will get stronger.”

“I see...”

“The Desert Apostles, who are trying to kill the Great Heart Tree and destroy people’s hearts, are definitely going to step up their attacks now.”

“Don’t worry~! My partner, Tsubomi, will transform into a Precure and protect everyone for sure~!” Chypre said with a smile.

“You are my partner?”

“Yes~! I am here to give you your Precure Seed and guidance as well~.”

“Is that so? And you were...”

“Chypre~. Let’s do our best together~!”

“Yes, let’s!”

Holding out her right index finger, Tsubomi shook hands with Chypre.

But as fast as the good mood came, it was just as quickly killed by Coffret:

“It’s pretty worrisome that we only have Tsubomi. She’s the weakest Precure in history after all.”

“W-What did you say?! I managed to defeat the Desertrian, didn’t I?” Tsubomi grumbled, but Coffret just went on:

“I also want to find my Precure partner quickly.”

“I’m sure you will find her,” Kaoruko said as she smiled, and looked at Tsubomi. “Chypre and Coffret should come home with us.”

“But won’t Mom and Dad be shocked to see them?”

“No problem~! We’ll pretend to be stuffed animals~.”

“Now then, let us go home,” Kaoruko held the fairies, and left the greenhouse with Tsubomi.

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As the four of them came out of the greenhouse, they noticed that some employees in front of the other building were tending to the flowerbeds that had been trampled by the Desertian.

“Shouldn’t we help them as well?” Tsubomi asked.

“They are going to be fine, don’t worry. They will do a careful job,” Kaoruko smiled, before her expression suddenly turned serious. “On another note, being a Precure means possessing great power, so you have to take care when fighting.”

“Okay. But somehow, I feel like becoming a Precure has changed me a little.”

“Well, I’m happy to hear that... To tell you the truth, I didn’t want to expose my granddaughter to any danger...”

“Grandma...”

“However, a Precure’s mission is to protect the Great Heart Tree. And now that you are a Precure, it is inevitable for you to face all kinds of difficulties,” Kaoruko said, and Tsubomi firmly nodded. “True to your name, you are still just a bud, but if you do your best as a Precure, you will definitely blossom into a beautiful flower.”

“You really think so, Grandma?”

Kaoruko nodded, which made Tsubomi so thrilled that she started walking backwards in front of her grandmother.

“Hanasaki Tsubomi will do her best! Yeaahh!” But as she raised up her fist, she suddenly bumped into a bush. “Kyah!” she squealed, and fell onto her butt.

“Us too,” the fairies looked at her in dismay.



“Oh, Tsubomi! Ufufu,” Kaoruko chuckled, and when Tsubomi started to giggle while rubbing her head, the fairies ended up joining the fun as well.

The evening star was shining brightly up in the sky, as if to celebrate the birth of a new Precure.

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That night, as Tsukikage Yuri was preparing for tomorrow’s world history class, she encountered a passage in the textbook that wasn’t entirely clear to her, so she turned on her PC to look it up. That was when she stumbled upon an article on the internet that a new Precure appeared and defeated the Desert Apostles.

*So Chypre and Coffret found somebody*, Yuri mused, but tried not to think about it any further.

Besides not being able to transform into a Precure herself, the sight of Chypre and Coffret automatically made her remember Cologne.

The mere thought was enough to make all the happy memories with him she had sealed into a deep part of herself resurface, and her heart began to ache.

Since that day, Yuri has been trying to stay away from Kaoruko’s Botanical Garden. She would only make Kaoruko worry if she saw her in this state, as Yuri didn’t want her to know that she still hasn’t been able to recover from that tragedy.

*I’m not a Precure anymore. I will let the new Precure take care of the fight against the Desert Apostles*, Yuri told herself, deciding to just live her high school life, while her heart remained closed.

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Next day at dawn, another girl saw the dream about Cure Moonlight getting defeated by Professor Sabaaku and Dark Precure, just like Tsubomi.

None other than Kurumi Erika.

Erika told Tsubomi about her dream during lunchtime that day, when they came up to the roof of the school building to eat together. After she finished, the fairies, who had been hiding inside Tsubomi’s lunchbox, suddenly jumped out and begged Erika to become a Precure.

Much like when they asked Tsubomi, Erika became startled by the appearance of the stuffed animal-like creatures, but followed along with the enthusiastic explanation given by Tsubomi and the fairies.

However, just then, the student council members came along, led by the president itself, Myoudouin Itsuki, who informed Erika that unless she hands in the fashion club's member list by the end of this week, they cannot provide the necessary budget for it this year, causing Erika to break out in a panic. Thus, the topic of the second Precure went forgotten.

And so that the fashion club won't get demoted to a circle that receives no budget unless there are five members in it, Erika, as the president of said club, began a recruiting campaign together with Tsubomi.

At the same time, another incident occurred: a first-year student called Ueshima Sayaka got rejected from the soccer club simply on the basis of being a girl, and becoming downcast, her Heart Flower got taken by Sasorina, who turned it into a soccer ball Desertrian.

After receiving the news from the fairies, Tsubomi hurried to the soccer field at the riverside to purify the Desertrian, which was already making a ruckus there.

However, Cure Blossom faced an uphill battle; the Desertrian was strong, its rage induced by Sayaka's sadness of being rejected by the soccer club, despite having played together with boys during elementary school without any problems.

At that moment, as Erika appeared on the top of the bank, the sight of the rampaging Desertrian voicing out Sayaka's feelings after her Heart Flower was taken away made her rooted to the spot; she was witnessing the same scene she saw in that dream yesterday while she was unconscious after her own Heart Flower got stolen.

The moment she saw Sayaka's miserable expression inside the crystal sphere that Coffret picked up, Erika made her resolve to become a Precure.

"I'll be the second Precure!"

"Really?!"

"Coffret, give her the Heart Perfume quickly~!"

"Roger!"

The heart mark on Coffret's chest began to shine, and he summoned his Heart Perfume.

Erika took it, and dashed down to the riverbed.

The ball-shaped Desertrian began to twirl its body around like a spinning top to create a tornado, knocking over Cure Blossom.

Cure Blossom screamed as she tumbled in front of Sasorina.

“Hahahahaa, crush her, Desertrian~!”

The Desertrian stopped spinning, and began to draw closer to Cure Blossom, who couldn’t even stand up from the severity of the blow.

“Just you try!”

Erika came running over, standing in front of Cure Blossom in a protective manner.

“W-Who the hell are you~?”

Erika didn’t even answer, just helped Cure Blossom up from the ground, letting her lean on her shoulder.

“E-Erika...” Cure Blossom looked up at Erika’s profile.

“I will become a Precure too!” Erika declared with determination, and holding the Heart Perfume at the ready, she turned over to Coffret, who just caught up with her, shouting: “Give me that Precure Seed!”

“Go, Precure Seed!”

The heart mark on Coffret’s chest glowed up, and as the Precure Seed sprang forth from it, Erika caught it and inserted it into the Heart Perfume.

“Precure! Open My Heart!” she called out, her body becoming enveloped by holy light, and a white dress appearing on her. Then, she sprayed the holy perfume over herself, which formed a blue-coloured outfit on her body. “The flower swaying in the sea breeze... Cure Marine!” she finished, taking up a cool pose. Coffret’s jaw dropped.

“H-How did you know how to transform when I didn’t even tell you?”

“I saw it in that dream yesterday. I’ve been thinking about my name all day since you asked me to join.”

The answer was very typical of Erika – true to her younger sister personality, she picked up on things very easily.

Despite her shock at the arrival of a second Precure, Sasorina shouted at the Desertrian:

“What are you waiting for, Desertrian~?! Get them both~!”

Raising up its voice, the Desertrian retracted its limbs, and came rolling towards Blossom and Marine with the intention to flatten them under itself.

Cure Marine took Blossom in her arms, and jumped over with ease, moving out of its way.

The Desertrian spun backwards, and came into a sudden halt. As Cure Marine landed, she said:

“I will take care of the rest, you just take it easy!” She put down Cure Blossom, and charged at the Desertrian from the front. “Okay, Desertrian, take me on! Come!”

The Desertrian let out a roar, and began to spin like a top towards Cure Marine to crush her, forming a tornado.

“The same trick won’t work on me twice! Take this!” Cure Marine made a jump to evade the attack, until she stopped right above the Desertrian while it was still spinning inside its own tornado. “Your head is unguarded! Taaahh!”

Putting her ankles close together, Marine dived right into the middle of the tornado.

The Desertrian began to shriek, and as the tornado stopped, Cure Marine came swooping down, sinking both feet into the Desertrian’s head.

She flipped around immediately, landed on the ground, and as she fiercely charged forward, she swung back her right leg, and delivered a violent kick at the Desertrian.

The Desertrian was sent flying, followed by a screech, then slammed into a bridge girder in the distance, and dropped to the ground.

“Cure Marine! To retrieve her Heart Flower, you must...” Coffret started to explain, but Marine cut in:

“I already know that too!” She reached up with her right hand. “Gather, power of flowers! Marine Tact!” she recited in a loud voice, summoning a blue-tipped Tact from the brooch on her chest. “What’s next, Coffret?”

“Shout ‘Flowers, sparkle! Precure Blue Forte Wave’!”

Cure Marine spun the Tact’s crystal reel with her left hand, drew a blue streak of light around her, and the tip of the Tact began to shine.

“Flowers, sparkle! Precure Blue Forte Wave!”

As she swung down her Tact, a blue flower-shaped projectile shot out from it, and blasted into the Desertrian, whose body got wrapped in the holy light, and slowly began to lift up in the air.

Promptly, Cure Marine spun the middle of the Tact with her left, putting all her spirit into the move.

“Haaaaaa!”

While it was being purified, the Desertrian even let a smile show on its face, before it turned back into its former form of a soccer ball and dropped to the ground. Then, the crystal containing the poinsettia Heart Flower separated from it, and remained floating in mid-air.

As Cure Marine grabbed the crystal, Sasorina scowled at her in anger:

“Curse you! Your next opponent is me~!”

She was about to extend her hair like last time, when Cure Blossom, whose strength has returned by then, jumped in, landing by Marine’s side.

“At full power again! If you want to continue with your evil deeds...” and they quickly stood back to back, “...you’ll be facing the two of us!” they said, pointing towards Sasorina. Seeing such spirit, Sasorina could only utter a mundane parting remark:

“D-Damn you, Precures! I’ll let you off the hook for today~!” she spurted out, disappearing with a flash of light.

“We did it, Cure Marine!”

“Yay!”

Blossom and Marine made a high five in the air, while the fairies flew over to them.

“Cure Marine, you have to return this girl back to normal quickly!”

Coffret held up the crystal sphere with Sayaka trapped inside.

“Roger!”

As soon as the tip of the octagonal crystal and the sphere came into contact, the sphere was engulfed by holy light, and Sayaka emerged from the inside, returning to her original size.

Tsubomi and Erika transformed back, and carried her under the bridge.

Once Sayaka regained her consciousness, she told them about the dream she saw while she was out.

“I was mistaken. I made myself believe that just because I’m a girl, I couldn’t keep playing soccer in middle school anymore, and I lost heart...”

“But you still love soccer, don’t you?” Tsubomi asked.

“I do! So I’m going to start a girls’ soccer club!”

Hearing Sayaka’s positive attitude, Erika nodded with a smile:

“Hey, great idea!”

“Alright, I will have to start recruiting club members, like you! See you then!” Sayaka bowed to her seniors, and ran off while kicking into the ball.

“Do your best!”

“Go for it!”

As Tsubomi and Erika waved her goodbye, the fairies came out of their hiding place behind the piers of the bridge as well.

“The meaning of poinsettia in the language of flowers is ‘a heart that burns with passion.’ I’m sure she will become a great girls’ soccer player.”

Erika nodded her head in agreement while smiling, when Coffret’s tail suddenly began to shake.

“Puri-puri-puri... puririn!”

Once the Heart Seed came out of his bottom, Chypre caught it in her paw.

Coffret summoned the Heart Pot with a glow of his heart mark, and Chypre put the Heart Seed inside the Pot.

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Tsubomi and Erika went back to the school to pick up their bags, and it was well into the evening that they headed home. They soon reached the park where the fight against the doll Desertrian occurred yesterday.

“Oh, right. I forgot to give it back.” Erika pulled out the doll from her bag, which she changed into a new, pretty outfit, and mended the parts that were torn on it. “Here’s the doll you gave me yesterday.”

“You really fixed it for me. Thank you so much.”

At that moment, they caught sight of a little girl of around 5 years old with her mother, looking for something under the nearby shrubbery.

“...?”

When they got closer and their gazes met, the little girl noticed the doll in Tsubomi’s hands.

“Ah, Mako-chan...!”

“...! Is this doll yours, by any chance?”

The girl nodded ‘yes.’

Tsubomi saw the mother looking at her curiously, and began to explain:

“Ah, it was lying here yesterday, so I picked it up. Then I asked my friend to repair it for me... Here you go.”

Tsubomi signalled to Erika’s direction with her eyes, then handed the doll to the little girl. The mother looked relieved, and said with a smile:

“I see, thank you so much. How nice of her, right?”

“Yep. Thank you, onee-chan,” the little girl thanked Erika.

“You’re welcome.”

The girl waved at them as she left with her mother, and as they saw her off, Tsubomi and Erika broke into a smile themselves.

“It’s a pretty nice feeling to know that you did something good.”

“It is! Erika, let’s do our best as Precures together from now on!”

“Yeah! And also at recruiting club members.”

At that moment, Tsubomi’s stomach started to growl.

She went red in the face.

“I just remembered that I missed lunch because the fairies hid inside my lunchbox.”

“Hahahahaha, I know a great crepe shop, so let’s go eat!”

“Okay!”

Holding hands, Tsubomi and Erika happily ran off together.

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The next day, news about the appearance of a second Precure spread amongst the residents of Kibougahana.

Naturally, it also reached the ears of Tsukikage Yuri through conversations with her mother and her classmates.

Yuri was going to pay it no attention, just like when she found out about Cure Blossom.

However, as the Desertrians kept causing a disturbance within the city of Kibougahana, she inevitably ended up witnessing how those two new Precures would fight against them.

And each time, she would involuntarily compare the inexperienced Cure Blossom and Marine to herself during the time she was Cure Moonlight. Those two fought with nothing but the raw powers of a Precure. No finesse, nor any effort made to refine their individual techniques.

*I never faced such dangers, and I was fighting alone. Why won't they think about the importance of fighting as a team?*

Whenever Yuri saw those two in action, she felt irritated.

What she found especially terrible was how they involved their fairies in battle. Whenever Yuri fought against the Desert Apostles and the Desertrians as Cure Moonlight, she was constantly on the lookout for Cologne’s position to make sure he didn’t get caught up in the fight. Likewise, other than the times when it was necessary to give her advice, Cologne too,



either made himself invisible, or kept a distance long enough where they could still hear each other.

They didn't do it like that because of some previous agreement. It came as a result of mutual trust and the deep partnership they built.

Compared to that, Cure Blossom and Cure Marine both forgot about their fairies the moment they launched into action. The fairies were still very young, and unlike Cologne, they didn't have the ability to make themselves invisible yet, so they were constantly exposing themselves to the enemy.

If the enemy were to target the fairies and something irreversible happened, the girls' Precure Seeds would be rendered useless, and they wouldn't be able to transform anymore. And if it ever came to that, the Earth would surely fall into the hands of the Desert Apostles.

These thoughts made Yuri unable to stand around any longer, she had to visit Coupe in the Plush Toy Hall, taking advantage of Kaoruko's absence. She believed that, similarly to her, the new Precures, mentally exhausted from the tough fights against the Desert Apostles, would also come to Coupe for a recharge.

Just as Yuri guessed, Tsubomi and Erika really came that day. And as soon as they entered, they cuddled up to Coupe for comfort. They noticed Yuri, who had already been there, crouching over the potted geraniums. Yuri realised they were the new Precures the moment she saw them talking to Coupe.

*Isn't that the girl who...*

She recognized one of them as the girl she saw on the first day of the new term, who was looking at the clovers in front of the gate, and who Yuri thought was a transfer student.

As Tsubomi and Erika looked into her direction, Yuri asked them:

"Do you know the meaning of geranium in the language of flowers?"

Tsubomi replied right away:

"I believe it is 'true friendship' and 'trust.'"

Erika instantly chimed in:

"Just like us," she said, and the two smiled at each other.

Holding back her anger, Yuri stood up.

“Apparently, you don’t know what that truly means,” she remarked over her shoulder, then walked away. Not comprehending the actual meaning behind Yuri’s words, Tsubomi and Erika watched her leave dumbfounded.

Of course, Yuri didn’t doubt the importance of trust and friendship between fellow Precures, she just wanted them to realise that the bond between a Precure and their fairy should be equally as strong and treasured.

However, the reason why Tsubomi and Erika came here today wasn’t just because they wanted some comfort from Coupe. Professor Sabaaku, fed up with the pathetic performance of his generals, finally sent out Dark Precure, who kidnapped Chypre and Coffret before the girls even had the chance to transform. In exchange for the fairies’ lives, Dark Precure demanded the Heart Seeds from them. Thus, they came to the Plush Toy Hall to discuss the next steps with Kaoruko.

When they finally figured out the true meaning of what Yuri said, they realised how important the fairies were to them, both as friends and partners, and were determined to stand up against the overwhelmingly powerful Dark Precure.

But before they could hand over the Heart Pot containing the Heart Seeds, they were attacked by Sasorina, who came together with Dark Precure.

As Chypre and Coffret were held hostage by Dark Precure, Tsubomi and Erika were practically powerless, until Coupe showed up in his usual appearance of a handsome shosei and rescued the fairies.

The pair transformed into Precures right away, and managed to fight back against Sasorina, however, they didn’t stand a chance against Dark Precure’s brutal attacks, and got beaten to the point of transforming back.

Yet, just as Dark Precure was about to deliver the final blow, the silhouette of a certain girl appeared in the corner of her eyes: Tsukikage Yuri.

Dark Precure, who thought Yuri was dead, appeared to be in shock for a moment.

“...So that’s what happened,” she muttered under her breath, then smiling boldly, she took her leave, allowing Tsubomi and Erika to get away from danger unharmed.

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It happened a few weeks later, on a Saturday, at the beginning of summer.

Yuri didn't have school, so she stayed up late studying for exams and reading, and ended up sleeping in, which was a rare occurrence for her.

When she entered the kitchen, she found her mother, Haruna, already preparing breakfast and waiting for her. As she took her seat, Yuri apologised for oversleeping. As always, the plate and chopsticks were set in front of her father, Hideaki's seat as well.

It has already been three years since Hideaki went missing in Paris. Even though it was a habit she herself started to keep hope alive in Haruna, Yuri now suggested that they should stop setting the table and preparing side dishes for her father already.

But Haruna just gave her a strange look, and asked:

“Why?”

“We haven't heard from him for three years now. Dad must already be...”

But before Yuri could finish the sentence, Haruna interjected:

“Your father is alive.”

“What makes you say that?”

As Haruna answered Yuri's question, she even smiled:

“I just know. He's definitely alive.”

It didn't answer her question, but Yuri stopped asking any further.

“I'm not going to argue with you, Mom. I won't tell you to don't do it anymore. Now then, let's eat.”

“Yes.”

They put their hands together, and started to eat their breakfast.

Yuri knew her mother was trying her hardest to put on a strong face. She saw right through her, that she was trying not to let her daughter notice it, so Yuri felt it would be cruel to bring her down even during mealtimes. Thus, she promised herself to continue with this sad tradition from hereon as well.

After they finished their meal and Haruna headed off to work, Yuri decided to finally visit Kaoruko in the Botanical Garden after what felt like forever. Haruna asked her on her way out to do so as well, but it was also because she wanted to apologise for acting rude to

Kaoruko, who had come to see her so many times since that day, yet Yuri never even opened the door for her.

Just as Yuri stepped out of the flat, she received a phone call from Kurumi Momoka. Momoka was about to go shopping with her sister and her sister's friend now, and she asked Yuri if she wanted to come along.

Yuri politely declined, and headed towards the Botanical Garden.

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It has been several weeks since Yuri's last visit to the Botanical Garden's Plush Toy Hall, where she hugged Coupe, and pressed her cheeks against him. Coupe's embrace filled her with happiness, and the warmth of his hand gently stroking her head soothed her heart. It reminded her of being caressed by her father as a little child, and she wished time stopped then and there so she could stay in that embrace forever.

At that moment, Kaoruko entered the greenhouse.

"Yuri-chan, you finally came. Long time no see."

Yuri let go of Coupe immediately, and apologised for her impolite behaviour. Kaoruko told her not to worry about it, and said sorry for not being able to provide any news about Hideaki.

Not that Yuri expected it anyway, so she simply thanked her and was about to leave, when Kaoruko suddenly brought up that the new Precures were her own granddaughter, Tsubomi, and Tsubomi's friend, Erika.

Yuri knew that already, but she chose to keep quiet. Then Kaoruko asked her if she would be willing to guide them as a senpai Precure.

Yuri flat-out refused that, and just then, Tsubomi burst into the greenhouse, panting heavily.

Originally, Tsubomi was going to go shopping with Erika and her sister, Momoka, but after Kaoruko called her to tell that the Agave americana has bloomed, she left them on the spot and came running here.

"Just once in decaaaades!" Tsubomi yelled with excitement, referring to the time it took an Agave americana to bloom for the first and last time in its life, but Yuri hadn't a clue what she was babbling about.

Kaoruko then introduced them to each other.

“You’re the one who...” Tsubomi said, recognizing her as the person in the Myoudou Academy high school uniform who gave them advice when Chypre and Coffret got captured by Dark Precure. “It was your advice that helped us save our precious friends last time. Thank you so much.”

Tsubomi bowed to Yuri. As Kaoruko was also present, Yuri could only mutter:

“I didn’t...” she tried to explain herself. Kaoruko smiled.

“Is that so?” she said, turning to Yuri.

“No, I didn’t! I just told them about the meaning of a flower! Then, I will take my leave.”

Yuri bowed to Kaoruko, and was about to leave.

“Wait, Yuri-chan! The Agave americana has just blossomed. Don’t you want to see it with us?”

“Agave americana?”

The flower’s name sounded familiar, as she had heard about it from Kaoruko and her father before. Being a flower enthusiast, Yuri decided to see it before going home.

The three of them moved over to the other greenhouse, and gazed at the blooming yellow flowers of the Agave with sparkling eyes of excitement.

It was then that Tsubomi’s cell phone started to ring, and when she answered, she heard Erika’s voice, who was supposed to be on a shopping trip with Momoka.

“Erika, what’s the matter? ...What?! Dark Precure is at the station and...”

It took Yuri a mere mention of the word ‘station’ to rush away immediately.

The nightmare of her mother being turned into a Desertrian that one time resurfaced in her mind.

Tsubomi hung up, perplexed at the sight of Yuri dashing out, while Kaoruko shouted after her with the colour drained from her face:

“Yuri-chan!”

She then turned towards Tsubomi to tell her that Yuri's mother worked in one of the shops at the station.

"What?!" Tsubomi gasped in shock. She and Kaoruko chased after Yuri.

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In front of the Kibougahana Station, an army of Snackeys were running rampant, causing the people to flee in a panic amongst screams.

Pushing Momoka into the escaping crowd, Erika searched for a place where she could transform into a Precure.

As she was about to do so, she heard the scream of a woman and the crying voice of a child from the station building.

Turning her gaze towards the shop by the entrance, she saw Haruna there, as she was shielding a child who couldn't escape, shaking in fear surrounded by the Snackeys.

At that moment, Yuri dashed past Erika, and while bolting towards the shop, she knocked down all the Snackeys along the way with nothing but her bare hands, then helped up Haruna and the child from the ground.

"Yuri-chan!" Haruna said in surprise. Yuri shouted back at her:

"Get out of here, quickly!"

Haruna nodded, then grabbing the child by the hand, she made for an escape.

As Erika watched Yuri taking down the Snackeys one by one with her fists and feet as they kept coming at her, she exclaimed in admiration:

"S-She's good!" However, as soon as Yuri was finished with the Snackeys, Dark Precure stepped in front of her, and for a moment, the two were just glaring into each other's eyes. "I have to do something!"

Just when Erika finally decided to transform, she saw Tsubomi come running towards her along with Chypre and Coffret.

They transformed into Precures right away, and hurried towards Yuri.

Noticing them, Dark Precure sneered:

“It’s not you I wanted to lure here when I unleashed these Snackeys.”

The moment she held out her right hand, dark energy gathered in her palm, which she fired at them without hesitation.

Cure Blossom and Cure Marine were immediately blown back towards the circular fountain in front of the station, followed by a scream.

“Now we won’t be bothered by them,” and with that, Dark Precure jumped at Yuri.

Somehow, Yuri managed to evade the intense, powerful punches and kicks launched at her, and asked:

“Why are you still so fixated on me?”

At that moment, Dark Precure hit her with a violent roundhouse kick that sent her flying outside the station grounds.

Fighting back the pain, Yuri rose to her feet, while Dark Precure started to draw closer.

“Because... Because you are me, Cure Moonlight!”

That sentence reached the ears of Cure Blossom and Cure Marine as they climbed out of the water in the fountain.

“Yuri-san is...”

“Cure Moonlight?!”

When Yuri turned towards the source of the voices, Dark Precure used that opportunity to deliver a front kick at her. The kick hit Yuri right in the abdomen, making her tumble to the ground in front of the two Precures with a groan.

Dark Precure thrust out her right arm towards Yuri, and began to concentrate her power into her palm.

“I am enough by myself. I shall make you disappear.”

As soon as the Precures helped up Yuri from the ground, Dark Precure released a dark energy wave from her palm with tremendous force, directed towards their trio.

A huge explosion followed, and smoke enveloped the area.

The eyes of the fairies filled with despair, as they were watching the scene from afar.

“The Precures...”

Tears welled up in their eyes.

At that moment, as the smoke was swept away by the wind, they saw a young man standing there with his arms crossed on his chest, his back facing the three.

Chypre and Coffret instantly let out a squeal of relief.

Dark Precure glared at the young man.

“You again... Who the hell are you?”

Without answering, the young man launched an attack against Dark Precure, and a fierce physical confrontation began to take place.

Kaoruko took this chance to rush over to Yuri and the Precures.

“Girls, now is the time to escape!”

They nodded, and followed Kaoruko as she made for a run.

The battle between Dark Precure and the young man commenced on equal grounds, when suddenly, he jumped backwards.

As Dark Precure tried to close in on him, he put his feet down, and raised up his left index finger. In that instant, he made a whirlwind of countless rose petals arise, which concealed his silhouette. When the tornado dissolved, there was no sign of the man.

“Curse you...” Dark Precure spat with contempt. She scrutinised the area, only to discover that Yuri and the Precures were gone as well. “You can run as much as you want. As long as I have this, you can’t hide from me, Cure Moonlight” she said as she opened her left hand, revealing Cure Moonlight’s broken Precure Seed, which began to flicker with a dim purple colour.

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Upon bringing back everyone to the Botanical Garden, Kaoruko began to treat the bruises on Yuri’s hands and legs. Behind them was Coupe, who has already returned to his fairy form. The Precures were observing Kaoruko’s movements attentively.



“I wonder who that handsome man is who always comes to our rescue,” Cure Blossom wondered. Kaoruko glanced over to Chypre and Coffret who were giving Coupe a shoulder massage, and smiled.

“Well, he’s certainly not an enemy.”

Suddenly, Coupe’s expressionless face clouded over, and he turned his gaze up to the ceiling.

Shortly after, Chypre gasped in panic as well:

“Dark Precure is approaching~!”

“Coupe has put up a barrier, so she shouldn’t be able to find us...” Kaoruko said, but Coffret shook his head, saying:

“But she’s definitely heading here!”

After her injuries were taken care of, Yuri joined in:

“It’s probably because of this,” she said, pulling out a pendant from her breast pocket. She was holding the broken half of Cure Moonlight’s Precure Seed, as it repeatedly pulsed with a faint glow.

“T-That’s...!”

“A Precure Seed?!”

As the Precures exclaimed in surprise, the fairies cried out as well:

“We can’t let Dark Precure find this place~!”

“We have to stop her at all costs!”

Nodding firmly, Blossom and Marine dashed out of the Plush Toy Hall, leaving Kaoruko in Yuri’s care.

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With her wing spread wide up in the sky, Dark Precure was soaring towards the Botanical Garden, following the Precure Seed as it was starting to flash faster the nearer she drew.

“Fufufu, she’s close...” Suddenly, she spotted Cure Blossom and Cure Marine by the Botanical Garden and the adjacent park waiting for her. “The Precures...!”

Dark Precure landed in front of the pair.

As soon as she put down her feet, they took up a fighting stance and declared:

“We are going to protect Yuri-san!”

“We won’t lose this time!”

They made the first move, and attacked Dark Precure.

The fight seemed to go evenly at first, but Dark Precure, whose powers far surpassed theirs, gradually began to gain the upperhand during the physical combat, and blasted them to the ground with the intense punches and kicks she threw at them.

“We are going to protect Yuri-san, no matter what...!”

Gritting their teeth, Blossom and Marine stood up, and raised their hands towards the sky at once.

“Gather, power of flowers! Blossom Tact!”

“Gather, power of flowers! Marine Tact!”

Their Tacts appeared in their hands.

“Gather, power of two flowers! Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!”

As they swung down their Tacts, holy light enveloped them, and they charged at Dark Precure fiercely.

However, Dark Precure also summoned her Dark Tact, and recited:

“Dark Power Fortissimo!”

Her body was covered in a similar, yet sinister glow, as she flew towards the rapidly approaching duo.

The three lights collided, soon followed by a huge explosion.

But even so, the difference in power was evident. The ones who re-emerged from the smoke, tumbling to the ground with a scream, were none other than Tsubomi and Erika. Their

transformation undone, they were now clad in a white dress, while their Tacts fell out of their hands at the same time.

They clenched their teeth with all their strength to try to get up, but found themselves unable to move even a finger.

With a look of arrogance on her face, Dark Precure held out her right hand towards them, gathering dark energy, and was ready to deliver the finishing blow.

“Stop, Dark Precure!”

That was when she heard the voice of Professor Sabaaku echoing from the sky above.

Dark Precure looked up at the sky in bewilderment. She couldn’t see Sabaaku anywhere, yet, his voice rang out a second time:

“The Snackeys told me everything. Didn’t I tell you not to concern yourself with Cure Moonlight anymore? Return here at once.”

“...Understood. Luck is on your side today,” Dark Precure mumbled in frustration, and spreading her wing, she took off to the sky.

Tsubomi and Erika watched her go with a look of exasperation, until Kaoruko and Yuri came running towards them. They carried them over to the Plush Toy Hall, and tended to their injuries.

“That voice that called back Dark Precure... Who did it belong to?”

Yuri answered Tsubomi’s question:

“Probably the leader of the Desert Apostles, Professor Sabaaku.”

“So there are even worse guys than the Sasorina trio...”

Seeing Erika’s darkened expression, Tsubomi changed the subject:

“By the way, I was really surprised to discover that Cure Moonlight was... Yuri-san.”

“...” Yuri said nothing, just dropped her gaze to the floor.

“Yuri-san, please help us fight against the Desert Apostles!” Erika bowed her head, and Tsubomi followed suit:

“Please!”

Still looking downwards, Yuri shook her head.

“Yuri-san?”

Not understanding why Yuri, a former Precure, who proved to be more than capable even with her bare hands, was not willing to help them, a look of confusion appeared on their faces. Yuri then slowly lifted her gaze, saying:

“I just can’t fight alongside you. My mother must be worried about me by now. Well, then.”

As Yuri bowed to Kaoruko and turned around to leave the greenhouse, Tsubomi shouted after her:

“Yuri-san!”

But before she could run after her, Kaoruko put a hand on her shoulder, stopping Tsubomi.

“Please, leave her be for now.”

“Grandma...?”

“The wounds on her heart that she suffered after Sabaaku and Dark Precure defeated her are still fresh. Furthermore... Yuri-chan lost her fairy as well, so she can no longer turn into Cure Moonlight.”

As Kaoruko uttered those shocking words, Tsubomi and Erika were left completely speechless.

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When Yuri stepped out of the Botanical Garden, she saw Haruna come running towards her from the sidewalk on the opposite side.

“Yuri-chan!”

“Mom...”

Haruna took Yuri’s right hand into hers.

“I was so worried! I went back to the station, but you weren’t there, so I looked for you everywhere...”

“I’m sorry,” Yuri apologised, but Haruna just shook her head.

“No need to apologise. I was just worried about you.”

Yuri nodded in understanding, then headed home with her mother.

Watching them leave from the gate of the Botanical Garden with Tsubomi and the fairies, Erika let out a sigh:

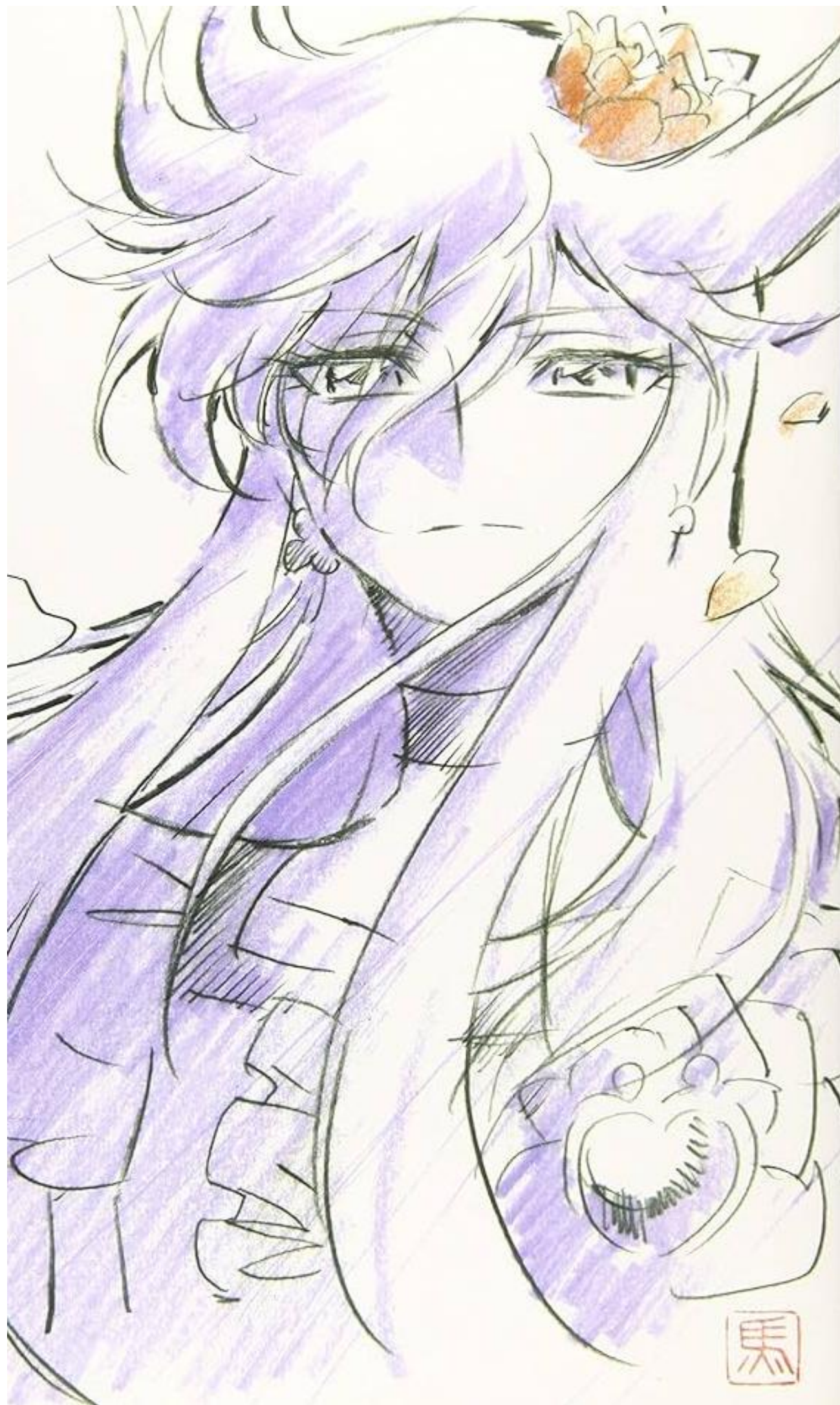
“So it would be pointless to ask again, huh.”

Tsubomi nodded, and the fairies said encouragingly:

“You saw it in your dream, right~? Cure Moonlight did everything she could to protect the Great Heart Tree~.”

“The ones who have to carry on that determination are you two! You have to give your everything in place of Cure Moonlight as well!”

The two of them looked up in earnest, and nodded with confidence.



## Chapter 4 - The Return of Cure Moonlight!

With the arrival of summer, the Precure team has gained some new members.

Succeeding Chypre and Coffret, the Great Heart Tree gave birth to a new fairy called Potpourri, who finally grew old enough, and came to Kibougahana carrying a Heart Perfume and an important item for the Precure Palace.

Potpourri was told by the Great Heart Tree to recruit a third Precure who would help Cure Blossom and Cure Marine, and the person chosen to be Potpourri's partner turned out to be someone Tsubomi and Erika were both familiar with.

That someone was Myoudouin Itsuki, the grandchild of Myoudouin Gentarou. He was the founder of Tsubomi and Erika's school, the Myoudou Academy, and a shihan at the Myoudouin Traditional Martial Arts School.

Itsuki was the president of the Myoudou Academy Middle School student council, a student who excelled in academics and sports as well.

Even though Itsuki was a girl, she decided to live as though she was a boy and threw away her feminine side in order to become a worthy successor of the Myoudouin Traditional Martial Arts School in place of her sickly older brother. At school, she wore a gakuran like the boys, and even her speech and mannerisms resembled those of a boy's as well. Because of that, Tsubomi even developed a bit of a crush on her when she first came to the school.

However, Itsuki had a bitter encounter with one of the Desert Apostles, Cobraja, who turned her into a Desertrian after finding out about her feminine side she has so forcefully repressed inside herself. Luckily, the Precures have managed to save her and retrieve her Heart Flower – a peony, whose meanings include “a royal heart”, “honour”, and “modesty.” Since then, she has learned to express her inherent fondness of adorable things and her interest in women's fashion openly, without keeping it a secret from her family and her friends.

This experience, along with seeing the dream about Cure Moonlight's defeat like Tsubomi and Erika before, were what pushed her to join the Precures as their third member: Cure Sunshine.

The addition of Cure Sunshine meant a significant increase in power for Cure Blossom and Cure Marine as well.

Since Itsuki's specialty was aikido, a martial arts form based on uke – that is, receiving attacks –, Cure Sunshine took on the defence, which in turn allowed Blossom and Marine to focus on the offence while fighting together.

After befriending Itsuki, Tsubomi and Erika also joined the Myoudouin dojo, where they received formal training in martial arts. Instead of exclusively focusing on attacking like before, this helped them understand the importance of ukemi, the art of responding to an attack properly, which proved to be very useful in their fights against the Desert Apostles generals and the Desertians as well, causing them to keep up their winning streak.

Even Yuri, who hadn't accepted Cure Blossom and Cure Marine as righteous Precures before, came to recognize their improvement with the arrival of Cure Sunshine, and started to advise them more willingly.

In fact, once she realised that their strength as Precures stemmed from the strength of their friendship itself, she came to believe that their power may soon surpass even hers as Cure Moonlight, who was always fighting by herself.

In the background, developments were occurring among the Desert Apostles as well.

Sasorina, who was sent out to fight the Precures much more frequently than the other generals, was constantly exposed to the holy light emitted by the Cures during the purification of the Desertians, and as a result, she herself also happened to get caught up in the purifying process.

The constant sight of Sasorina's depressed face and sighing while staring out at the desert in front of the hideout, made Professor Sabaaku wary; thus, he equipped the generals with new weapons called Dark Bracelets, which allowed them to use even stronger dark power than before.

Thanks to the Dark Bracelets, the generals – now even more powerful – were able to enter the Desertians directly, control them at will, and fight against the Precures that way.

The Precures have always managed to defeat them, albeit just barely.

Without their new 'Precure Shining Fortissimo', an attack they worked out during a special training, combining Cure Sunshine's 'Precure Gold Forte Burst' and Cure Blossom and Marine's 'Precure Floral Power Fortissimo,' they probably wouldn't have stood a chance.

Kaoruko started to feel that unless their trio becomes stronger, they could never properly purify the three generals, nor defeat the much more threatening danger that was Dark Precure.

Then, as if it was meant to be, the Heart Pot became full with the Heart Seeds gathered by the Precures.



Kaoruko wondered if the reason why Professor Sabaaku gave the generals these Dark Bracelets was because he was starting to lose his patience.

If he was serious about defeating the three Precures, it would be only logical for him and Dark Precure to take care of them personally, just like when they did with Cure Moonlight. And yet, they never came for the girls. Kaoruko believed that something was holding back Sabaaku from doing so, but she hadn't the slightest idea what that might have been.

She also tried to figure out the reason behind Sabaaku's impatience. She could only think of two explanations: one, the leader of the Desert Apostles, Dune, was coming to Earth soon, or two, Sabaaku was being reprimanded by Dune for failing to eliminate the Precures like he should, and was afraid that it will cost him his position. In case of the latter, Sabaaku himself will probably join the fight sooner or later. However, if it's the former, Dune will no doubt personally come for Kaoruko's pendant, since it had a part of his own dark power sealed inside.

After making sure that the pendant around her neck didn't show any changes, Kaoruko let out a brief sigh.

The Plush Toy Hall was very quiet today, even for a weekday afternoon.

While preparing some darjeeling, Kaoruko realised it was time to seriously think about the path the Precures were about to take.

When her tea was ready, she pulled out the Heart Pot, now full with Heart Seeds, hidden behind the heart mark on Coupe's chest, and placed it in front of her teacup.

The Heart Pot should guide the Precures to the Precure Palace, where a huge trial awaits them, and if they are able to pass it, they can obtain the most powerful Precure item: the Heartcatch Mirage. Kaoruko strongly believed that 50 years ago, it was the Heartcatch Mirage that allowed her to stand up against Dune in the first place, and seal his dark power inside her pendant.

If the girls really obtained the Heartcatch Mirage, the object that can increase a Precure's holy powers to infinite levels, they could easily purify not only the generals, but probably Dune as well.

However, Kaoruko didn't expect that the newly formed Precure trio would be qualified to earn the Heartcatch Mirage this early.

She feared that even with their powers combined, the strength of the three Precures probably fell way behind hers or Cure Moonlight's when they were ready to go to the Precure Palace.

*And if they can't complete the trial...?*

Distress began to show on Kaoruko's face, when Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki suddenly walked in together with their fairies.

"Can I help you, girls?" As Kaoruko asked, a fourth person entered the room: Tsukikage Yuri.  
"Yuri-chan?"

Yuri silently bowed to her as a greeting, then stepped behind the others.

"Grandma, Yuri-san told us everything. About the Heartcatch Mirage and the Precure trial," Tsubomi started, soon to be joined by Erika and Itsuki:

"We want to protect the Great Heart Tree and everyone's Heart Flowers to the very end."

"And for that, we need to gain power that's strong enough to stand up against Sabaaku and Dark Precure."

"Please, take us to the Precure Palace," the three girls said in unison, lowering their heads.

"..."

Seeing Kaoruko's hesitation over whether to comply with their request, Yuri opened her mouth:

"Kaoruko-san, I am asking you to take them as well."

"Yuri-chan?"

As Kaoruko looked at Yuri, the other three also turned around.

"I understand your feelings of reluctance very well. You probably felt this way when I decided to go there too."

"..."

"But I have no doubt that these girls are now ready to take on the trial."

"Are you absolutely sure?" Kaoruko looked into Yuri's eyes.

"It's true that they may be lacking in strength against Dark Precure. But with some good teamwork, I'm sure they can defeat her."

"Yuri-san...!"

The three of them looked at Yuri with similar earnestness.

“I believe a Precure’s true strength doesn’t lie in their power alone. These girls have something that I lacked back then. And that something is a strong bond of friendship and very deep mutual trust.”

Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki felt moved as they listened to her. Learning that the same Yuri, who had only seen them as third-rate Precures before, finally came to acknowledge them, brought tears to their eyes.

That was also the moment when Kaoruko realised: Yuri has finally overcome the severe defeat and loss she had experienced.

“...Very well. You shall go to the Precure Palace.”

“Grandma!” Tsubomi wiped her tears, glancing at Kaoruko with the others.

“But only on one condition.”

“Condition?” Tsubomi asked back, and Kaoruko looked Yuri in the eyes again.

“I want you to go with them too, Yuri-chan. And I want you to determine whether these girls are worthy of earning the Heartcatch Mirage.”

As all eyes were focused on her, Yuri gave a silent nod.

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And thus, after transforming into Precures, the three girls, the fairies, and Yuri arrived at the Precure Palace, following the lead of the Heart Pot.

In the sky above them, they saw the lush green crown of the Great Heart Tree, as it appeared to observe the Precure trial.

The team of four and the fairies crossed a stone bridge, then walked through a stone hallway, finally reaching the Precure Palace, which reminded them of an ancient temple.

Opening the huge door before them, the girls continued their way through a corridor, which was basking in the sunlight shining through the gorgeous stained glass windows. When they arrived at the first room, the door opened by itself.

The group stepped into a circular atrium with a domed ceiling.

Once again, the door closed by itself, and a figure stepped forward in the aisle on the second floor towering in the front: none other than Kaoruko.

“Grandma?!”

Kaoruko revealed that the Precure trial consisted of fighting against and defeating the previous Precure; only then can they obtain the Heartcatch Mirage.

“Fight me and prove how strong your hearts are.”

Kaoruko’s words made Cure Blossom shake her head wildly.

“I... can’t fight against my grandmother.”

“And the feeling’s mutual. Which is why you will fight against *him* in my stead.”

As Kaoruko said this, a single rose petal fell from the ceiling.

The Cures looked up to see several more petals come scattering from above, forming a whirlwind.

When the whirlwind stopped, that young man stood before them who always came to the Precures’ rescue in the face of danger. But instead of his usual shosei attire, he was wearing a white longcoat, and even his glasses were missing.

The girls were startled and confused.

“Why is the handsome man who always helps us...?!”

“Don’t even hope he will go easy on you. If you don’t have the resolve to defeat him, you might as well leave now,” Kaoruko said, to which the Precures’ expressions stiffened.

“Understood.” Cure Blossom looked at the young man as she said, “I have always admired you in secret. But if we want to protect the Great Heart Tree and people’s Heart Flowers, we must become stronger!”

“Yeah! It is our duty!” Cure Marine joined in, and Cure Sunshine nodded in accordance.

“Yuri-san and the fairies, please stand back.”

Following Cure Blossom’s orders, Yuri retreated to the entrance with Chypre, Coffret and Potpourri.

Once Cure Blossom confirmed their safety, she glared at the young man.

“We are going to overcome this trial without fail!” she cried out, then rushed towards him.

The young man stepped away from Cure Blossom’s agile kicks and thrusts with ease, then delivered a punch and a roundhouse kick at her with twice as much speed as hers.

Cure Blossom was knocked over. This time, Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine tried to attack him simultaneously, but the young man blocked every attempt with his arms and elbows.

Even when they tried to ambush him from the sides, he swiftly spread both arms, and released a powerful energy wave in their direction, blowing them both away.

*As I feared. They weren’t ready yet...*, Kaoruko thought to herself, as she was watching them from the balcony.

“Blossom, don’t give up~!”

“Show some guts, Marine!”

“Sunshine, do your besht!”

That was when their fairy partners broke into vigorous encouragement.

As if in response to their voices, the Precures stood up from the ground next to the wall they crashed into.

“This cheering felt good to hear.”

“Looks like we are at a disadvantage in close combat.”

“Let’s try our long-range attacks next!”

Utilising their relevant special attacks – Blossom Impact, Marine Impact and Sunshine Flash –, the trio began to fire energy waves and light shards in unison.

With a quick raise of his right hand, the young man erected the stone tiles from the floor around him, blocking the projectiles right away. Then, with an assertive gesture, he made three of the tiles lift up in the air, and shot them in the Precures’ direction.

Letting out a scream, the Cures tried to get out of their way, but the floor tiles controlled by the young man began to follow their track.

“Blossom, Marine! Get behind me!” Cure Sunshine shouted, and her two teammates jumped behind her back. Promptly, all three tiles made a U-turn in the air, before swooping down to attack Cure Sunshine.

Sunshine held out her hands against the approaching stone tiles without delay.

“Sunflower Aegis!”

Summoning a defensive shield in the shape of a sunflower, she managed to block the floor tiles.

Meanwhile however, the young man slipped inside the barrier from the side where her guard didn’t reach, and suddenly fired an energy blast from his palms.

The trio crashed into the wall with a cry.

With that, the young man seemed to have emerged victorious from the fight – but then, gritting her teeth, Cure Blossom stood up.

“We cannot afford to lose this battle. We are going to prove the strength of our determination to you!”

Hearing those words, the other two rose to their feet too, looking Cure Blossom in the eye.

Even without exchanging words, Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine both understood what their next move should be the moment they saw that sparkle in her eyes, and nodded in agreement.

Once again, the young man lifted his right hand. Then, as if it were a pendulum, the chandelier hanging from the dome-shaped ceiling began to swing, shooting all its crystals, which looked like candles, out towards the trio.

Just like before, Sunshine quickly blocked the attack with Sunflower Aegis, and when the young man tried to ambush from the side again, Blossom and Marine delivered a powerful palm heel strike at him, as if anticipating the move.

The young man was blown backwards, and slammed against the wall. Cracks appeared on its surface, sending a cloud of debris fly up.

Grabbing the opportunity, Cure Blossom pulled out her Blossom Tact, and Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine did the same with the Marine Tact and the Shiny Tambourine.

Then, Sunshine struck her Tambourine.

“Flowers, dance! Precure Gold Forte Burst!” she recited, making a giant halo appear, which shone in all colours of the rainbow.

Next, Blossom and Marine readied their Tacts.

“Gather, power of two flowers! Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!” they shouted. As the holy light surrounded their bodies, they dived right into the rainbow-coloured halo. The three Precures then all called out together:

“Precure Shining Fortissimo!”

Penetrating the halo, Cure Blossom and Cure Marine’s bodies started to shine brighter, until they turned into a beam of light and pierced through the chest of the young man, just as he staggered back to his feet.

As they landed behind him, they declared:

“Heart... Catch!”

Striking their finishing pose, Blossom and Marine began to spin the crystal reels on their Tacts, while Sunshine moved the Tambourine in front of her in a circular motion; as they focused on the move, they raised their voices:

“Haaaaaaa!!”

The young man slowly rose up in the air.

“You have come a long way indeed,” he whispered, but unlike the Desertrians, a purification process didn’t take place; instead, he transformed back with a poof, and fell to the ground.

“C-Coupe-sama...?!”

Discovering that the mysterious handsome man had been Coupe all along came as a big shock to the Precures, but the fairies were so overjoyed that they immediately clung onto him.

“T-To think that the handsome man was actually Coupe-sama...” Only Cure Blossom hung her head in disappointment.

Kaoruko came down the stairs to join the others.

“Well done, everyone,” she praised the Precures for their efforts, then continued, “Potpourri, could you please give me the Seed you have received from the Great Heart Tree?”

“Yesh.”

Potpourri produced the coin-like object kept in her tiny pochette, and handed it to Kaoruko.

“Now, everyone, put your hands on this Seed. You too, Yuri-chan.”

The four girls did as they were told, and placed their hands on the Seed one by one; then, the Seed glowed up brightly, and turned into a key in the shape of a circle.

“Blossom, insert this key into that door.”

Cure Blossom brought the key to the door in the back of the room, and placed it inside the hole right in the middle. At that moment, the key began to shine, and the door slowly creaked open.

Inside, they were greeted by several bronze statues of past Precures – the one right in the front was Cure Flower herself in her youth.

The Precures followed Kaoruko through the room, until they arrived at a pedestal in front of a giant stained glass window.

Above them, the Great Heart Tree slowly moved closer to the glass ceiling, and they could hear its voice resound:

“Precures, you have shown me your unfaltering determination. Thus, I shall bestow this upon you.”

A ray of light extended from the Great Heart Tree, and once it reached the group, a pretty pink object manifested in front of their eyes, resembling a makeup box. They were looking at the legendary Heartcatch Mirage itself.

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Following Cure Blossom, who was carrying the Heartcatch Mirage, the group exited the Precure Palace with a smile, and the Great Heart Tree slowly returned to the skies above.

The Precures turned over to Yuri, who has accompanied them all the way here.

“Yuri-san, thank you so much for everything,” they said, bowing deeply.



“Ah... I... I didn’t even do anything. You overcame the trial thanks to your strong friendship. Something that a lone fighter like me lacked...” Yuri said in a flustered manner, looking downwards, when Cure Blossom turned to Kaoruko:

“Grandma, does the Heartcatch Mirage have any other powers besides making us stronger?”

“It certainly does. It can take you to the Great Heart Tree and show other people’s Heart Flowers.”

“Anything else? Maybe something that would let Cure Moonlight fight again?” Cure Marine asked nonchalantly, to which Yuri’s face clouded over.

“Don’t ask for the impossible.”

“But Yuri-san, if you became a Precure again, this team could be a hundred, no, a thousand times stronger,” Marine said, looking at Kaoruko to seek confirmation.

“What do you not understand about not possible?! Just take a look at my Heart Flower with the Heartcatch Mirage!” Yuri snapped at her, glancing over at Cure Blossom.

As Cure Blossom held up the Heartcatch Mirage in front of Yuri, a withered white lily appeared in the mirror.

“...!”

Horror reflected in everyone’s eyes.

Kaoruko gently put her arms around Yuri’s shoulder.

“She didn’t mean to hurt you, Yuri-chan. Still, I hope that your Heart Flower will revive one day.”

Noticing how the girls were looking at her with so much worry, Yuri gave a small nod.

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After returning to the Botanical Garden with the others, Yuri headed home alone.

As she was crossing the pedestrian bridge illuminated by the setting sun, a deep sadness washed over her, and she suddenly came into a halt. When she used to fight against the Desert Apostles under the name of Cure Moonlight, Cologne did advise her to recruit new Precures to be her comrades after introducing her to Chypre and Coffret at the Great Heart

Tree. Yet, she refused, thinking she could tackle the task on her own. Looking back on it now, it was an utterly egoistic and foolish decision; a mistake that had brought about the death of her own partner, Cologne.

Yuri pulled out the fragment of her Precure Seed from her breast pocket, and clutched it tightly. Tears started to fall from her eyes uncontrollably.

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The next day, Dark Precure returned to the Desert Apostles' base from her search for the Great Heart Tree.

Hurrying to Professor Sabaaku, she lowered herself on one knee before bowing her head to him.

"Dark Precure...! Have you found the Great Heart Tree?"

Dark Precure silently shook her head.

"I think I have made myself clear not to return until then."

"Something alarming has happened, and I thought it would be best to report it immediately."

"Alarming?"

Dark Precure stood up, went over to Sabaaku, and opened her clenched right fist. She was holding the shard of Cure Moonlight's Precure Seed, which was now flashing to the rhythm of a heartbeat.

Sabaaku's eyes widened.

"W-What is the meaning of this...?"

"I believe something strange is happening to Cure Moonlight... or rather, to Tsukikage Yuri."

"Hmm..."

While Sabaaku was pondering over the matter, Dark Precure lowered her head, saying:

"Please, allow me to investigate it."

"Very well. You have my permission."

Dark Precure nodded, rose to her feet, and spreading her wing, she took off to leave the room.

Sabaaku stood up from his chair, and glaring at the dark rockwall in front of him, he called out:

“Sasorina, Kumojacky, Cobraja!” The three generals immediately flashed into view on the surface of the rock. “Dark Precure will lose her head if she goes out alone. You three follow along.”

The generals bowed to him, and in the next minute, they were gone.

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Meanwhile, Tsubomi, Erika, Itsuki and Yuri entered the Botanical Garden’s Plush Toy Hall together with the three fairies. They all hurried here after receiving a call from Kaoruko asking them to come as soon as they can.

Kaoruko was looking at the Heartcatch Mirage at the table in front of Coupe, who appeared quite worn out after the exhausting Precure trial.

“Grandma, is there something wrong?” Tsubomi asked, to which Kaoruko replied, her eyes still fixated on the Heartcatch Mirage:

“Yuri-chan, come closer!”

“Yes...”

Yuri moved closer to Kaoruko.

“The Heartcatch Mirage has the power to show what’s happening around the Great Heart Tree, no matter its location. I think you should see this.”

Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki also stepped closer to the Heartcatch Mirage, and looked at the Great Heart Tree’s reflection in the mirror.

As they glanced at it, a lavender-coloured light ball caught their attention, as it was floating around the Great Heart Tree.

“What is this light...?” Yuri asked, but instead of answering, Kaoruko directed her words to the Heartcatch Mirage:

“Heartcatch Mirage, show us that light ball from up close.”

And so, the view focused in on the lavender light among the branches.

To everyone’s surprise, it revealed the transparent body of someone assumed to be dead: Cologne.

“C-Cologne!” Yuri gasped in disbelief.

“What?!”

The girls leaned forward to see it better as well.

“I think this happened because the Heart Pot has become full,” Kaoruko said, and the fairies replied enthusiastically:

“It’s thanks to you for collecting so many Heart Seeds~!”

“It’s a miracle!”

As Yuri stood rooted to the spot in astonishment, averting her gaze from the mirror, Kaoruko spoke to her:

“Yuri-chan, you should go to the Great Heart Tree. Such miracles don’t happen twice. If you have something to say to Cologne, do it now.”

“...!”

With a look of determination, Yuri silently nodded. Seeing the expression on her face, the girls smiled at her.

Kaoruko stood up from the chair to make room for Yuri.

“You have to press the blue key, and the Heartcatch Mirage will take you to the Great Heart... to where Cologne is.”

Yuri gestured in understanding, and was just about to press the blue key on the Heartcatch Mirage, when suddenly, Chypre and Coffret cried out:

“Dark Precure~!”

“And she’s coming fast!”

Yuri drew out the pendant from her breast pocket right away, and saw the Precure Seed fragment shining with a faint glow.

“Yuri-san! You should go and see Cologne!”

“We will take care of things here!”

Yuri glanced at Tsubomi and Itsuki, and gave them a firm nod. Kaoruko smiled at her reaction, and even Coupe gave her a wink despite his sunken eyes.

As Yuri pressed onto the blue key, her body flashed up, and she was pulled inside the mirror.

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Dark Precure was following the flickering of the half Precure Seed in the air, when suddenly, it stopped shining upon reaching the park next to the Botanical Garden.

“What the?!” she gasped, and as she looked down below, she saw Tsubomi, Erika, Itsuki and their fairies dashing out of the Botanical Garden. “...!”

Dark Precure stopped in her flight.

The trio immediately transformed into Precures, then turned their gaze towards the sky to look Dark Precure sharply in the eye.

As she landed before the group, she asked:

“Where is Tsukikage Yuri?”

“You’re out of luck. She just left,” Cure Marine said grinning.

“Ggh... Doesn’t matter, I can beat it out of you!” Dark Precure snapped in anger, charging at the Precures violently.

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A rainbow-coloured portal in the shape of a heart materialised before the Great Heart Tree, and the door slowly opened. As Yuri stepped out of it, she started wandering around the roots, looking for Cologne.

“Cologne! Cologne, I know you’re here!”

A moment later, she heard his voice coming from behind the Heart Tree:

“Moonlight.”

Yuri began to run towards the source of the voice, and soon glanced upon Cologne’s transparent figure as he came flying towards her.

“Cologne!”

The flurry of emotions burst out of her in the form of a cry, yet Cologne just looked at her with that usual brash smile of his, raising his right casually to greet her:

“Hi there.”

“Cologne...” Yuri stepped closer with the intention to take him into her arms, but her hands went right through Cologne’s body. “...!”

Her eyes widened, and she looked at him with an expression that told she could break out in tears any minute.

“My physical form has already perished.”

“...!”

The tears she has been holding back began to stream down her cheeks now.

“Don’t look so sad. Blossom, Marine and Sunshine made it possible for me to come back for a bit by collecting enough Heart Seeds.”

“I’m sorry. It’s all my fault...”

Cologne looked up at the Great Heart Tree as he spoke:

“I have been watching you, you know. Even after that fateful day. You were always straining yourself too hard on your own.”

The bitter, painful memory resurfaced in Yuri’s mind: despite Cologne’s warnings, she still chose to confront Dark Precure and Professor Sabaaku on her own, and it resulted in his death.

“I was such a fool... I thought I could do everything on my own... I misjudged my own abilities.”

Casting his eyes down, Cologne shook his head, then slowly looked up to meet Yuri's gaze, saying:

"Moonlight... You're wrong. You knew it best how heavy a burden it is for a Precure to risk their life for the sake of protecting people's Heart Flowers. That's why you took all the responsibility on yourself and tried to fight alone."

"...!"

Yuri, who had been listening to him with her head hung, looked up.

"You didn't want anyone else to get hurt. You thought... the only one to carry that pain should be you. That's how kind a person you are. It was clear as day to me."

Yuri's eyes filled with tears once again.

"Cologne..."

"You need to be more aware of yourself, Moonlight. Of your kindness. How you care for your friends. You have already understood how important and how much of a blessing it is to have friends after meeting Blossom, Marine and Sunshine, right?"

Yuri gave a small nod.

"Then, you are ready to fight against the Desert Apostles once again."

"No, I can't."

Yuri took off her pendant, and showed Cologne her broken Precure Seed.

"That's how your heart looks right now. Your wounded heart that lost me and lost to Dark Precure," Cologne pointed out, which made Yuri's eyes widen. "But if you wish to fight alongside your friends and protect the world, then you can indeed become Cure Moonlight."

"...!"

"So if you wish to be Cure Moonlight again, just tell it to the Great Heart Tree."

As Yuri lifted her gaze up at the Great Heart Tree, the rainbow-coloured portal that looked like a heart, suddenly flashed up behind her.

Yuri and Cologne turned around in surprise to witness the scene of Dark Precure knocking down the Precures with overwhelming strength through the entry of the door.

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With an arrogant smile, Dark Precure scanned her eyes over the three Precures lying before her feet. Their fairies were shaking in fear as they clung onto each other on the side.

“Fufufu... Now tell me where Tsukikage Yuri is. Or else... Dark Tact!”

Using her right hand, Dark Precure summoned her weapon.

The Precures mustered up their strength as they rose to their feet.

“Even if we knew, we would never tell you!”

“We are going to...”

“Protect Yuri-san!”

Declaring so, the trio unleashed their strongest attack, the same they also defeated Coupe with: Precure Shining Fortissimo.

Dark Precure answered with her Dark Power Fortissimo, and as the lights of good and evil collided, a fierce battle began.

“Uwoooooohh!”

“Don’t take me the same as those three generals! Uwoooooohh!”

“Uwaaaaaahh!”

As Dark Precure’s sinister light overpowered them, an explosion occurred, blowing Cure Blossom and Cure Marine backwards. Cure Sunshine barely managed to catch them.

“N-Not even our combo attack is strong enough against her...” she whispered, Blossom and Marine lying in her arms unconscious.

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Yuri saw everything through the heart-shaped doorway.



“She is going to...” Yuri turned towards the Great Heart Tree, and cried out, “Great Heart Tree! Make me... Make me into a Precure, once again!”

At that moment, the Great Heart Tree began to shine, and a voice rang out:

“Tsukikage Yuri...”

“...! ...Yes.”

“Hold out your Precure Seed. Now, pour your feelings into it.”

Yuri held up her Precure Seed fragment, focusing on her wish of wanting to become a Precure.

In that instant, her Precure Seed lit up, and Yuri herself also began to shine.

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Concurrently, the trees in the park suddenly glowed up in the same manner as the Great Heart Tree.

“What is this light...?!”

Holding Blossom and Marine, Cure Sunshine scanned her surroundings.

“The light of the Great Heart Tree...?” Dark Precure muttered under her breath, when suddenly, all the holy light from the glowing trees began to concentrate in a single spot – right where Yuri appeared next.

“Yuri-san...!” Surprised, Cure Sunshine stared at her, to which Yuri’s answer was a confident smile.

“You... You couldn’t have!” Dark Precure shook in anger, but Yuri remained calm as she spoke:

“Courage, love, friendship, kindness, sorrow, joy... So many feelings. The hearts of so many. And I am going to fight! For the hearts of those people!”

Yuri held up her Precure Seed in the air.

In that moment, the missing half of the fragment filled up with light, becoming a full, complete Seed.

“Precure! Open My Heart!”

Inserting the Precure Seed into the lid of the Heart Pot, Yuri raised it to the sky again. Her body was enveloped in the holy light among a flurry of flower petals, and before anyone could so much as blink, Cure Moonlight was standing there, transformed.

“H-How?!” Dark Precure blurted out in stupefaction.

“The flower glistening in the light of the moon... Cure Moonlight!” declaring so, she struck an elegant pose. That moment marked the return of Cure Moonlight.

“Cure Moonlight...”

“...Is back!”

The voices of the fairies finally brought Cure Blossom and Cure Marine back to consciousness. They could only stare in awe as Dark Precure now stood face to face with Cure Moonlight in front of their eyes.

“C-Cure Moonlight!”

“Yuri-san finally managed to become Cure Moonlight again.”

Extreme rage radiated from Dark Precure’s eyes as she glared at her.

“H-How did you transform?! Your fairy is gone!”

“Even if Cologne’s body perished back then, his soul lived on with the Great Heart Tree. And thanks to the Heart Seeds collected by Blossom, Marine and Sunshine, I too, was able to come back as Cure Moonlight.”

She then held up the lid of the Heart Pot with the complete Precure Seed inside.

Aghast, Dark Precure looked down at her own piece with hate, her grip tightening on it.

“I should have... finished you off then and there... Damn it all!” Filled with rage, Dark Precure jumped forward. The kicks and punches were showering at Cure Moonlight with incredible speed, and only by a hairwidth did she manage to repel them. “S-So fast! Curse you!”

Throwing her right arm forward, Dark Precure summoned dark energy in her palm, then fired it at Moonlight.

Cure Moonlight crossed her arms before her body right away to defend herself against the huge explosion that followed.

Dark Precure smirked as she watched the smoke, being certain in the outcome.

However, when the smoke cleared, she noticed the indentation in the ground that continued in two lines further up. She followed the track with her eyes, and saw Cure Moonlight at the very end, standing there with her feet planted firmly in the ground, her arms still crossed in front of her.

“What?!”

Dark Precure was taken aback, while the three Precures rejoiced:

“Cure Moonlight!”

Moonlight suddenly dropped the defensive state.

“I won’t stop fighting until every heart is full again! I will not repeat the same mistake as when I lost Cologne! Haaaa!”

With a fierce cry, she came at Dark Precure in the split of a second, launching a series of sharp kicks and punches at her, as learned from Kaoruko.

Forced into a defensive position, Dark Precure jumped backwards, and upon landing, she summoned dark energy in her hands again, which she shot towards Moonlight without delay.

“Moonlight Reflection!”

In that instant, Cure Moonlight thrust out her arms towards the incoming projectiles.

Her palms flashed up, creating two circular silver shields, which she sent out towards the approaching energy bombs.

Cure Moonlight then drew a circle in the air with her outstretched hands, making the two shields move along with her to block the attack. The projectiles hit and exploded against its surface one by one, but they never managed to break through them.

While Dark Precure was busy dealing with the shields, Cure Moonlight took the opportunity to quickly get behind her and deliver a violent roundhouse kick, hitting Dark Precure in the abdomen.

“Gahh!”

The kick sent her flying towards the fountain in the park.

At that exact moment, Kumojacky appeared in front of the fountain with a flash, with Sasorina and Cobraja on both sides.

Dark Precure came plummeting towards the trio, and landed right in Kumojacky's arms.

“W-What are you three doing here?!”

“Sabaaku-sama sent us to keep an eye on you~.”

“Now that Cure Moonlight is back, things are getting interesting,” Kumojacky grinned. Dark Precure sent him an icy glare.

“Moonlight is mine. Don't you guys dare intervene!”

“Can't do that. We have our own scores to settle with her too, you know.” As Cobraja said that, he pulled out his cards, and threw them at Cure Moonlight in a sequence. With a sharp strike of her hands and a kick, all of them were repelled in the order they came. “Consider that a greeting. Dark Bracelet!”

Cobraja then raised his right hand, making his Dark Bracelet materialise on his wrist with a sinister glow.

He held up his middle and index fingers to reveal the Joker card between them, and as he made a swift leap in the air, he tossed it at Cure Moonlight. The card flashed up in its flight, before separating into five different pieces.

“...!”

Cure Moonlight tried to evade them by reflex, but couldn't get away in time from one of the cards that exploded right on her. Then, in succession, even the ones she already escaped from began to blow up behind her back.

The detonation sent Cure Moonlight flying with a scream, and she only managed to land by flipping around in the air. Even then, she quickly dropped to one knee, holding her side.

“Moonlight!!”

The three Precures were immediately by her side, trying to shield her.

“Out of my way, Cobraja! She's mine!”

In a rage, Dark Precure charged past Cobraja, took out the Precures with a few quick moves, then made an attack on Moonlight once again.

The strength she came at her with was so great that it left no chance for Cure Moonlight to counter, and was forced on the defensive.

“We have to help Cure Moonlight!”

Upon hearing Cure Marine’s voice, the other two slowly got to their feet with the intention to go assist Moonlight again, when the three generals teleported in front of the group, blocking their path.

“You will be dealing with us~. Dark Bracelet!”

Sasorina and Kumojacky both summoned their Dark Bracelets.

“These Bracelets know more than just enhancing Desertrians, you know! They also strengthen our *own* powers!”

Having received their power-ups, the trio set upon the Precures. Blossom, Marine and Sunshine were now each fighting an uphill battle against one of the generals.

In the meanwhile, a fierce duel was also unfolding between Cure Moonlight and Dark Precure.

In order to avoid any civilians from getting involved in their fight, Moonlight tactfully lured Dark Precure to the rooftop of a building.

“Gather, power of flowers! Moon Tact!”

“Powers of darkness, gather up! Dark Tact!”

With those words, both of them summoned their Tacts.

“Flowers, shine! Precure Silver Forte Wave!”

“Dark Forte Wave!”

The holy light and evil light released by the two Tacts collided, struggling for dominance.

“Dark Precure, why do you hate me so much?!” Cure Moonlight remembered the strange words thrown at her during the time she fought Dark Precure when she couldn’t transform: *Because you are me*. “Dark Precure, whatever did you mean by ‘You are me’ back then?”

“If you are the moon’s light, then I am its shadow... And once the shadow swallows the light, the moon will finally become one! Uwooooohh!”

Dark Precure’s will has finally prevailed: the struggle between the lights of good and evil has been determined in her favour. Her dark energy wave overpowered Cure Moonlight’s, and as it hit her, a loud explosion could be heard.

Tumbling out of the smoke, Cure Moonlight collapsed on the roof of the building behind her.

“And now, it’s time for the moon to become one,” Dark Precure exclaimed, spreading her wing, and lifted up to the sky.

That was when the half-conscious Cure Moonlight heard Cologne’s voice inside her head:

“Cure Moonlight!”

Empowered by the voice, she stretched her right hand forward to pick up the Tact from the ground.

“Right... I am not alone. I am not fighting by myself. As long as Cologne is with me, I will not be defeated!” Gritting her teeth, Cure Moonlight got to her feet and raised her Tact. “Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!”

As soon as her body was engulfed by the holy light, she charged towards the approaching Dark Precure.

Dark Precure also readied her weapon without delay, reciting:

“Dark Power Fortissimo!”

Her body covered by the sinister light, she flew towards the soaring holy light beam that was Moonlight.

And the moment the two lights met, it set off a huge explosion.

Traversing each other inside the smokescreen, the two of them landed on the opposite building’s rooftop.

Soon, Cure Moonlight’s face contorted in pain.

“Ugh...”

Losing her balance, she fell to her knee.

Dark Precure, who landed on the opposite building, slowly turned towards her with a sneer, when suddenly, holy light began to surround her entire being, and she felt as though a wave of electricity ran through her body.

“W-What’s this?! Gahh!”

With that, Dark Precure collapsed, her back hitting the ground.

As Cure Moonlight rose to her feet to approach the opposite building, all of a sudden, a sinister flash appeared in the sky, and swooped down next to the unconscious Dark Precure.

When the dark light dispersed, Professor Sabaaku stood in its place.

“S-Sabaaku!” Cure Moonlight yelled, but the man just silently took Dark Precure in his arms, then turned his back on her without notice. “Are you Dark Precure’s...”

However, before she could even finish her sentence, Sabaaku disappeared.

“...”

Cure Moonlight stood there lost in thought, until Cure Blossom’s scream reached her from the park’s direction.

As she turned towards the source of the voice, she saw Blossom in the grip of Sasorina’s braid, being repeatedly slammed against the ground.

“Blossom!”

Moonlight hastily made her way down from the rooftop.

Sasorina was watching Blossom struggle in the grasp of her hair with a look of amusement on her face.

“Ufufufu, I can give you a taste of my venom at last~.”

And just as she was about to pierce her with the stinger at the end of her braid, Cure Moonlight raised her Moon Tact above her head in her descent.

“Taahh!”

Then, she brought it down with all her might, creating a razor-sharp blast of wind, which cut Sasorina’s hair right in half.

“W-What the?!”

Cure Blossom dropped to the ground, finally breaking free of the braid constricting her.

“Hair is a woman’s pride and joy! How dare you!”

As Sasorina tried to fight back, Cure Moonlight, her feet already on the ground, spun around without delay, and struck her with a powerful roundhouse kick.

Sasorina let out a scream as she was sent flying by the attack, then crashing into the bronze statue by the fountain, she submerged into the water.

Next, Cure Moonlight’s sight set on Kumojacky, who was about to finish off Cure Marine with his large sword, while Marine tried to get on her feet shakily.

“Marine!” she shouted, coming at Kumojacky with her Tact at the ready.

Noticing her, Kumojacky pointed his sword at Cure Moonlight, his swing creating a huge blade from the air.

“Ha!”

Undauntedly, Cure Moonlight swung down her own weapon to form a similar airblade.

When the two collided, they offset each other.

“Wha—!”

Grabbing the chance of Kumojacky’s confusion, who had absolute confidence in his special move, Cure Moonlight drew a horizontal line with her Tact.

The giant airblade hit Kumojacky right in the abdomen.

“Gahh!”

Following Sasorina’s fate, he too, was blown backwards and fell into the fountain.

Moonlight’s attention was directed to Cure Sunshine’s struggles against Cobraja.

Cobraja grabbed his Joker card at the ready, while Potpourri was trying to pull up Sunshine from the ground.

Like the wind, Cure Moonlight closed in on him.

“Taahh!” she cried out, knocking the card out of his hand with a sharp kick.



“Y-You little...!”

Enraged, Cobraja was about to throw a punch at her, only to be stopped by Moonlight’s left elbow, while she focused her power in her right hand.

“Moonlight Silver Impact!” she called out, shooting the ball of energy at him without hesitation.

“Gah!”

With that, Cobraja was sent after his comrades into the fountain, just when they finally managed to climb out of the water. Kumojacky had no choice but to catch him.

“We will take it from here!”

Their energy revitalised, the three Precures rushed to Cure Moonlight’s side.

Cure Moonlight nodded in accordance, and they quickly pulled out their weapons.

“Precure Gold Forte Burst!”

As soon as the three generals saw Cure Sunshine summoning the rainbow halo, they began to panic:

“Damn, they are going to purify us!”

“Don’t think this is over!”

Then, in the next minute, they were gone.

Thus, the Precures put down their weapons, and gathered in front of Cure Moonlight.

“Thank you so much, Cure Moonlight!” they said, lowering their heads. Moonlight answered with a smile:

“No, I am the one who should thank *you*. You were the ones who made it possible for me to see Cologne one more time and to become Cure Moonlight again.”

At that moment, the fairies came flying over, with Coffret declaring cheerfully:

“Finally, all four Precures are together!”

The four Precures in question exchanged glances delightfully.

“What happened to Dark Precure?” Cure Blossom asked, but Moonlight just shook her head in frustration.

“I almost had her, when Professor Sabaaku arrived to take her away with him.”

“Who cares, we are now a million times stronger with Moonlight on the team! Dark Precure, Sabaaku, let them come, we will, uh... what’s that saying again?” Cure Marine mused, to which Blossom replied:

“Eat them for breakfast?”

“Yeah, yeah, that’s it!”

Cure Moonlight shook her head, saying:

“Do not take the Desert Apostles so lightly.”

The others’ expressions suddenly turned solemn.

“She’s right. This is certainly not the last time we have seen the Desert Apostles. Let’s join our forces and protect the Great Heart Tree – now with the four of us!”

To Cure Blossom’s suggestion, everyone nodded in agreement.

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After that, Cure Moonlight parted from the group to see her fairy, Cologne, at the Great Heart Tree.

Greeting her with a smile, Cologne said:

“I am happy for you... Cure Moonlight.”

“I knew it was your voice, Cologne. Back there.”

“You are going to be fine, it seems. Your Heart Flower is now...”

Cologne watched as the white lily, whose stalk had broken and was beginning to wither, started to shine and regain its vitality in front of his eyes.

“Thank you, Cologne.” But the moment Moonlight reached out to embrace him, Cologne dispersed into little fragments of light. “Cologne!”

Taken aback, her eyes welled up with tears, as she watched the glowing fragments slowly return to the Great Heart Tree, before being absorbed by it, leaving only Cologne’s voice behind:

“I can’t believe how easy it is to make you cry.”

“ ... ”

Trying to fight back her tears, Cure Moonlight could only nod. Nevertheless, despite all her efforts, a single teardrop still managed to escape her eyes.

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Likewise, the spectators inside the Botanical Garden’s Plush Toy Hall – Tsubomi, Erika, Itsuki, Kaoruko, and the fairies – were all moved to tears, as they observed their parting through the Heartcatch Mirage.



## Chapter 5 - Father!

The time has come for the leader of the Desert Apostles, Dune, to make his move at last.

He was still on the Castle Planet when Bossnackey came to report to him about Dark Precure's defeat by Cure Moonlight. Dune got on the radio to reproach Professor Sabaaku and his three generals:

"Earth will never be ours if I leave it to the likes of you, who can't even get rid of a few Precures. Well then. Let me give you a present from one of the planets I will conquer soon. You are welcome."

A few days later, Dune sent out a creature to Kibougahana that was of a completely different nature than Desertrians: a Desert Devil. Desert Devils were monsters born from Desert Seeds, and they were able to destroy all plants in sight, and turn the green lands into a desert with a single laser beam from their eyes.

When the Desert Devil came to attack, the citizens of Kibougahana were all shaking in fear; the park next to the Botanical Garden also fell victim to its destruction.

After hearing the news from the fairies, Tsubomi, Erika, Itsuki and Yuri wasted no time and transformed into Precures to face the Desert Devil. However, their regular attacks had absolutely no effect on it. They couldn't purify it even with their finisher, Precure Shining Fortissimo. Therefore, they each decided to unleash their individual Forte Waves and Forte Burst at the same time, which finally made the Desert Devil disappear, and a peculiar-looking antenna popped up in its place.

The voice that spoke from the antenna belonged to Dune. He called himself the leader of the Desert Apostles, and informed them that this Desert Devil had merely been his greeting gift.

Furthermore, he declared that he intends to send several more Desert Seeds to Earth, which will hatch into Desert Devils, and he himself will also arrive very soon to assume control over the planet.

Seeing how they could barely handle just a single Desert Devil, and realising that if the entire world was swarmed with those monsters, the four of them alone would be severely outpowered, the girls came to Kaoruko for advice.

As they learnt from her, in order to harness the infinite powers of the Heartcatch Mirage, they needed to go to the Precure Palace again and overcome one last trial.

However, Kaoruko hesitated; it hasn't been that long since the trial at the Precure Palace for the obtaining of the Heartcatch Mirage, and since Coupe still hasn't regained his strength, he wouldn't be there to help them if the need arose.

Even so, the girls insisted that if they wanted to defeat the Desert Devil army, they needed a powerup, and for that, they were willing to overcome any trial thrown at them.

Believing that their dedication was sincere, Kaoruko decided to take the girls and their fairies to the Precure Palace once again.

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As soon as the group of four arrived at the Precure Palace and transformed, holy light surrounded them.

In the next moment, they were sent to another dimension called the Mirror Realm, all separated from each other. There, each of them were greeted by a figure who looked exactly like themselves.

These figures represented their own respective past insecurities and difficulties.

For Cure Moonlight, her old self who couldn't stand up again after being defeated by Dark Precure and losing Cologne; for Cure Blossom, her old withdrawn self; for Cure Marine, her old self who looked up to her older sister, Momoka, while also harbouring jealous at her; for Cure Sunshine, her old self who forced herself to lock her true feelings deep inside her heart for the sake of her older brother, Satsuki, and her family. Each of those encounters turned into a fight.

This world was all created by the Mirror Realm inside the Precure Palace, and the four figures standing before the Precures were their shadow-esque versions.

At first, the girls were dismayed by these Shadows who bore the exact same features as themselves. However, in the middle of the fight, apart from Blossom, they all came to understand the significance behind this final trial, and now, after having grown as Precures, they were able to acknowledge their past selves and accept them more willingly. Once they realised that, the Shadows returned inside their bodies with a smile.

Following that, the three of them came back to the Precure Palace, to the place where they started. Then, they noticed that the bronze statues of past Precures inside the Palace garden have gained some new additions in the shape of their own statues.

It was an honour reserved only for those Precures who have managed to overcome the final trial. Likewise, it also meant that the three of them have now become stronger, and earned the right to use the infinite powers of the Heartcatch Mirage.

However, it wasn't the time to smile yet. After all, Cure Blossom had still yet to return.

Even then, she was fighting against her Shadow.

Refusing to accept her past self – her shadow – like the others, Blossom was fighting relying only on the strength of her current self, who has grown since.

“People cannot change so easily. You are better off being withdrawn and isolated. Stop fighting already.”

As her Shadow kept repeating so, Blossom found it harder and harder to retort, and the fight was gradually turning against her favour. She almost gave up, when suddenly, the faces of her Cure friends – Erika, Itsuki and Yuri – and the fairies, as well as their shared memories flashed up in her mind.

*My friends...!* her voice rang out inside of her, and she looked her Shadow standing before her straight in the eyes, saying:

“It is true that I used to think I was better off by myself, withdrawn as I was. I acknowledge that. But now I have Erika, Itsuki, Yuri-san and the fairies. My Grandma and Coupe-sama as well. People I can count on. They all support me. And with such people on my side, I am determined to protect the Earth, the Great Heart Tree and every Heart Flower!”

“You can embellish things all you want, that won't make you any different,” her Shadow said, as she kept coming at Blossom with her fists.

Yet, Cure Blossom stood up and bore with it.

“They may be just flowery words to you, but I really do love my friends for supporting me. It is their merit that I have been able to keep pushing forward.”

“But if you cannot change, that was all for nothing!”

Her Shadow threw another punch, but Blossom blocked it by crossing her arms.

“I... really believe that I was able to change, even if slowly... So it's no wonder that the other me who's still clinging to her old habits is still around.”

“Me, your shadow self, is your old self?” her Shadow stared at her in surprise.

“Yes. You are my cowardly other self, who always whispered ‘I can't. It's pointless to even try’ whenever I wanted to try something new.”

“...!”

“But I have finally realised it. If the one who dissuades me from doing something is myself, then the only one who can motivate me is also myself.” As Cure Blossom said that, the Shadow's hostile expression started to clear up. “My old self was very guilty of being dependent on others. But the only one who can carve a path for myself is me!”

Her Shadow's gaze softened up.

“Then I suppose you don't need your shadow self anymore.”

“On the contrary. In order to be true to myself, I need my slightly cowardly side as well. Which is why... I love my shy, withdrawn self just as much,” Blossom said, while embracing her Shadow. The Shadow smiled, before merging together with Cure Blossom and returning inside her body.

That moment marked Cure Blossom's triumph over the final trial, and she successfully left the Mirror Realm.

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Accompanied by a flash of light, Cure Blossom returned to the Precure Palace garden, and noticed a statue of herself standing in front of her teammates.

*I really have completed the trial.*

A sense of pride has awoken inside her, when she noticed Chypre flying towards her with the Heartcatch Mirage in her paws.

“What are you standing there with your mouth agape~! Go help the others, quickly~!”

“Huh? What happened to them?”



“They are back already, and fighting with a Desert Devil~!”

“What?!”

Shoving the Heartcatch Mirage into the hands of the dumbfounded Cure Blossom, Chypre led her to the front entrance of the Palace.

As they emerged from the doorway, Cure Blossom saw her friends fighting against the Desert Devil, the creature born from Dune’s Desert Seed, by the lake in front of the castle.

Just like how they managed to defeat it the other day, the three used their individual Forte Wave and Forte Burst attacks on it together, but even if they managed to hit its hands and arms, the Desert Devil regained its energy right away and continued the assault.

Cure Blossom rushed over to Kaoruko, who was observing the gruelling fight from nearby.

“Grandma! Girls!”

Everyone turned their heads towards her at the same time.

“Blossom! So you’ve passed!”

“Blossom, I knew you could do it!”

“Come, let’s fight together!”

Blossom gave them a nod.

“Chypre, turn into a cloak!”

“Got it~!”

With a glow, Chypre transformed into a cloak, and wrapped herself around Blossom’s shoulders.

Then, Kaoruko raised her voice:

“Now is the time to show your new, stronger powers! First, use the Heartcatch Mirage to become Super Precures!”

In that moment, the four keys on the Heartcatch Mirage representing the colours of the four Precures – pink, blue, gold and silver – lit up, and the mirror began to shine in all colours of the rainbow.

Kaoruko smiled and continued:

“Unite your hearts and shout, ‘The flowers shining across the world! Heartcatch Precure! Super Silhouette!’”

Looking at each other, the girls nodded, then called out:

“The flowers shining across the world! Heartcatch Precure! Super Silhouette!”

Four beams of light burst out of the rainbow-coloured heart mirror, enveloping the four Precures. Then, each of them received a tiara, earrings and wings in the shape of a heart, and the four of them transformed into their more powerful versions. That was the birth of their Super Precure forms.

As if to celebrate the moment, flower petals began to fall from the sky.

“Now, you can finally perform ‘Precure! Heartcatch Orchestra!’”

Cure Blossom nodded enthusiastically, then flew up to join the others in the altitude.

Nodding at each other, the girls made their trademark gesture of a blooming flower out of their hands, then recited together:

“Flowers, bloom! Precure! Heartcatch Orchestra!”

In that moment, an even brighter light radiated from the mirror, and a Precure goddess emerged from the inside, dressed in all-white, and so tall that she towered over even the Desert Devil.

As the goddess looked down upon the frightened Desert Devil, the Super Precures also turned into its direction, waving their Tacts and striking their Tambourines.

The goddess raised her fist, then brought it down again, right at the Desert Devil.

The Desert Devil let out a death scream.

“Haaaaaaa!”

As always when they performed a purification, the Super Precures spinned the crystal reel on their Tacts, and moved the Tambourine in a circular motion.

When the purification was over, the Desert Devil dispersed into little fragments of light and vanished.

Along with it, the goddess was summoned back into the mirror as well.

The Super Precures also turned back into their normal forms, then came to gather around Kaoruko, wrapping their arms around her.

“Grandma, we finally did it.”

“You really have worked hard, girls. And once you grow even more and your hearts become even more united, the Heartcatch Mirage will bestow its infinite powers upon you.”

“We can become even stronger than that?” Cure Marine asked, and Kaoruko nodded with a smile.

“You most definitely can.”

“Can we reach even Cure Flower’s level?” Cure Sunshine pressed on.

“When I completed the last trial and fought against Dune, I was only able to use the Heartcatch Orchestra as well.”

“So if we become skilled enough, we might also be able to purify Dune, right?” Cure Moonlight’s eyes lit up.

“That is something even I don’t know. Dune’s cruelty knows no bounds, and the way he’s able to conjure more and more hatred is unfathomable.”

“...”

As everyone fell silent at Kaoruko’s words, the fairies suddenly spoke up:

“Worry not~! You are the legendary warriors chosen by the Great Heart Tree, the Precures~!”

“Up until now, everything you thought was impossible, you have made it real!”

“Don’t give up now, girlsh!”

Their cheering brought back the smiles to their faces.

“You are right. After all, Cure Moonlight was able to overcome an incredibly great tragedy and come back as a Precure too!”

“Yeah!”

“Precures know no such thing as impossible!”

Cure Moonlight nodded in agreement at her friends’ words.

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After passing the last trial and becoming more powerful, the Precure team was challenged to a final showdown by one of the Desert Apostles generals: Sasorina, who also came equipped with the Dark Bracelets of Cobraja and Kumojacky.

Even though it was a tough battle for the Precures, three Dark Bracelets’ powers were simply too much for Sasorina’s body to take, and she came close to destroying herself in the process. Taking mercy on her, the Precures decided to purify her with Precure Heartcatch Orchestra, after which she disappeared without a trace, alongside her past Heart Flower of a katakuri.

To make matters worse, the leader of the Desert Apostles, Dune, finally decided to show himself before Kaoruko and the girls.

He came to take Kaoruko’s pendant with his dark powers sealed inside, taking the form of a little boy.

The girls wasted no time to transform in order to protect Kaoruko, but even with his powers sealed away, Dune proved to be so powerful and fast that he made them transform back, not even leaving them the time to call for their special attacks. He even took out Coupe without trouble.

While they were unable to even get up, Dune ripped the pendant off of Kaoruko’s neck, and shattered it to pieces in front of the girls. The dark energy that was locked inside now broke free, and returned to its owner. When that happened, Dune’s body, shrouded in a sinister glow, changed from a little boy to a young man.

“Fufufufu, Cure Flower has caused me quite a lot of trouble. Now, I will let her enjoy as the Great Heart Tree withers away and the Earth becomes a desert planet, causing humanity to lose all hope and slowly perish, right by my side in the first row.”

With that remark, Dune took Kaoruko and rose up to the sky, where Professor Sabaaku was already waiting for him, then together, they disappeared from sight.

Unable to do anything or even move a finger, the girls were forced to watch them go with their teeth gritted in frustration.

Even Coupe, as he looked up at the sky where Kaoruko had been just now, could only let out a heart-wrenching howl, completely unlike him.

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Being the monster as he was, the next stop on Dune's radar was right up at the Great Heart Tree.

Dark Precure had spent so much time searching for its location and still barely found it, but for Dune, who was now at full power, this too, was nothing more than child's play.

Easily destroying the barrier set up by Cure Sunshine, Dune smirked as he held out his right towards the Great Heart Tree, gathering dark energy inside his palms, then shooting the projectile right in front of the eyes of his hostage. As the dark energy bullet hit the Great Heart Tree, which has finally been revived by the Precures, it started to grow larger and larger. It took only a second to engulf the Tree completely, then, as the dark energy swirling inside the bullet broke free, a giant explosion could be seen. As the Great Heart Tree dropped all its leaves, the soil around the roots broke up into several chunks, which, instead of falling, remained floating in the air around the Heart Tree.

Kaoruko's expression turned pained as she whispered:

"What have you done..."

Dune burst into laughter, wearing a wicked smile.

"Hahhahhah, now there is nothing to protect the Earth anymore. And once my Desert Seeds grow into many, many Desert Devils, this planet will be finished."

"Earth still has hope left," Kaoruko said, glaring at Dune.

"Hope, you say?"

"The four Precures will definitely defeat you."

"Kukuku... Don't make me laugh! Why do you think I have taken you hostage? So that the brats will come to your rescue. And that when they come, I could take their Heart Perfumes in exchange for your life."

“H-How lowly!”

“If that makes you feel better. Once they can’t transform anymore, I’m going to torture them all to death right in front of your eyes, together with their fairies. The mere thought makes me tremble in excitement, Cure Flower.”

“Dune...!”

Kaoruko sent him a glare so full of hatred that her eyes seemed to be ablaze.

“Hahhahhah, I like that expression. Come on, hate me more. Consider this a payback for depriving me of my dark powers fifty years ago.”

“...”

Kaoruko remained silent, thinking this man was beyond saving, when she suddenly noticed sweat running down the chin of Professor Sabaaku under his mask.

*Why is he so nervous...?*

Catching Kaoruko’s glance, Sabaaku immediately turned to Dune with a suggestion:

“King Dune, we should return to the Castle Planet soon.”

“You’re right. We have to get things ready for the welcome party,” Dune said, and Sabaaku silently nodded.

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That evening, the Desert Devils hatched from the Desert Seeds which Dune had scattered over the world, and began their rampage.

Just as expected of the elite force that had already conquered and desertified another planet right before Dune came to Earth, these Desert Devils were twice the size as well as the power of the ones the Precures had managed to defeat before.

They had the terrifying ability to destroy mountains and buildings with the rays emitted from their mouths, turn everything into sand with the lasers shot from their eyes, and imprison the despairing people and their Heart Flowers inside crystals.

With millions of such creatures sent to the planet, the entire world turned into a desert during the course of a single night.

By the time the girls came to inside the Botanical Garden's Plush Toy Hall after being beaten by Dune, it was already the next morning. After hearing about the mass destruction of the Desert Devils from the fairies, they hurried outside.

Aside from the Botanical Garden, which remained unharmed thanks to the barrier set up by Coupe, everywhere they looked, it was a desert, with dark grey clouds hanging heavily from the sky.

"N-No way that in a single night this...!" Yuri became speechless. Likewise, the others stood there in a trance, rooted to the spot.

"Our homes... What happened to our homes?" Erika's exclamation brought back everyone to their senses.

"We should go and see, just in case!"

To Yuri's suggestion, everyone went to check up on their own home, and agreed to meet up again an hour later in the Plush Toy Hall.

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On her way to the Botanical Garden's employee residence, Yuri encountered many such crystals peeking out from the deserted ground everywhere.

Inside the crystals, she saw people in despair with their wilting Heart Flowers.

She didn't see a single soul who was alive and well along the way, only the desert as far as the eye can reach.

Tripping in the sand and falling several times, Yuri managed to reach the employee residence, which was buried under the sand up to just the tip of its roof.

"Mom!" she called out, as she desperately sank her hands into the sand. She did manage to dig up a few crystals, but none of them belonged to her mother; they were all other employees of the Botanical Garden or their family members. "Mom..."

Even so, Yuri continued to dig diligently.

Suddenly, something she heard from Kaoruko before came to her mind: according to her, if a Heart Flower was possessed by a Desertrian once, it will never be possessed again. Although not being able to recall the reason behind it, Yuri decided to hold onto that single ray of hope, stopped digging, and walked back to the Botanical Garden.

The others were already there when she arrived.

“Yuri-san, did you find her?” Itsuki inquired. Yuri shook her head no.

“What about your family, Itsuki?” Yuri asked back, to which Itsuki looked down at the three crystals at her feet as she answered:

“I found the crystals with my grandfather and my parents inside, but I couldn’t find Satsuki-niisan’s...”

“I see...”

As Yuri put her arms around the disheartened Itsuki to comfort her, she noticed that Erika was doing the same to a tearful Tsubomi.

“Tsubomi’s parents are also trapped inside the crystals...” Itsuki uttered. Yuri immediately came closer to look at the crystals by Tsubomi’s feet.

“This is cruelty... My mother was carrying a new life under her heart...”

“Tsubomi, crying is not going to solve anything. It’s times like these that we especially need to stay strong,” Yuri said. Tsubomi nodded weakly, when suddenly, voices hit their ears:

“Yuri-chan!”

“Erika!”

“Itsuki!”

“Hanasaki-senpai!”

As the girls glanced towards the desertified park, they noticed several people, whose Heart Flowers were restored by the Precures before, standing upon the sand dunes – Haruna, Momoka, Satsuki and the captain of the female soccer club, Ueshima Sayaka, among them.

*Kaoruko-san was right after all*, Yuri thought, yet, she did not let herself smile even upon reuniting with her mother. She didn’t want to rub salt into Tsubomi’s heart, whose family members could not be here.



“I get it! Everyone here are the people who were saved by the Precures!” Erika suddenly yelled in the middle of her conversation with Momoka.

“But I also see some who I do not recognize,” Tsubomi said.

“That’s no wonder. Cure Moonlight also saved people on her own, you know,” Yuri replied, and Itsuki nodded eagerly.

“I see, so that’s how it works!”

Haruna smiled, as she joined in:

“Even if the world has become so desolated, everyone who’s gathered here has no doubt that the Precures will defeat the Desert Apostles and restore it to its former glory.”

Momoka and Satsuki added:

“The Precures have always defeated every enemy, no matter how strong they were. Which is why we have no reason to give up hope.”

“As long as we have faith in the Precures, they will surely respond to our prayers.”

Yuri, Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki exchanged glances. Their former melancholic expressions were all gone by now.

That was when a Desert Devil appeared on the top of the sand dunes.

The monster broke into a howl, and sent a cloud of sand dust rise, as it began to descend the hill.

“You will be safe inside the Botanical Garden! Everyone, please, hurry!”

Obedying Tsubomi’s orders, the people began to run towards the Botanical Garden.

After making sure that everyone evacuated safely, the girls transformed into Precures.

“Let’s keep on fighting, so that the light of hope will continue shining for them!”

“Yes!”

Blossom, Marine and Sunshine nodded in agreement to Cure Moonlight’s words, then stepped in front of the Desert Devil, as it drew closer.

Letting out a roar, the Desert Devil opened its mouth to fire a beam at them, which the Precures evaded without issue, then turned towards Coupe, who was observing the fight together with the fairies.

Nodding, Coupe put his right paw inside the heart mark on his chest, and pulled out the Heartcatch Mirage.

The Precures gave each other the signal, as they shouted:

“The flowers shining across the world! Heartcatch Precure! Super Silhouette!”

In that moment, four beams of rainbow-coloured light sprang forth, enveloping and transforming the four of them into Super Precures.

Then, after displaying their usual pose of blooming flowers, they called out in unison:

“Flowers, bloom! Precure! Heartcatch Orchestra!”

As the mirror began to shine even brighter, the Precure goddess clad in all-white appeared from the inside, towering over the Desert Devil.

The goddess looked down at the Desert Devil, while the four Super Precures began to swing and strike their Tacts and Tambourines in its direction.

With a single punch, the goddess took out the Desert Devil, and the girls waved their weapons at the monster, completing the purification.

They heard cheering from the Botanical Garden.

As the goddess disappeared and the Super Precures went back to their normal forms from their Super Silhouettes, Coupe looked up at the sky, and let out a cry.

“Coupe-sama?” Cure Marine spoke up, when Coupe pointed to a spot in the sky.

“Is that where my Grandma is, perhaps?” Cure Blossom asked, and nodding in confirmation, Coupe knelt down right away, showing his back to Blossom.

“Come on, everyone, on Coupe-sama’s back~!”

“Coupe-sama will take us there!”

Reaching out with those long arms of his, Coupe put the whole group on his back.

“Coupe-sama has quite a wide back, indeed!” Cure Sunshine noted cheerfully, with Cure Blossom agreeing:

“We can count on him for anything!”

“Let’s go!” Potpourri said, and Coupe slowly began to lift up from the ground.

At that moment, the people in the Plush Toy Hall came out to bid them goodbye.

“Do your best!”

“Come back unhurt!”

“We will be praying for your safety!”

Leaving their voices behind, Coupe began to pick up the speed.

Passing through the clouds, they could see the blue sky expand before their eyes.

“As long as we don’t lose hope, I don’t think the Great Heart Tree can completely wither,” Cure Moonlight said, to which everyone nodded in agreement.

Cure Blossom closed her eyes.

“If I close my eyes like this, I can see the Great Heart Tree with its beautiful flowers,” she said. The others followed her example.

“Great Heart Tree, please don’t die.”

“And please, help everyone stay strong.”

“We are going to save you.”

“Please, wait for us a bit longer.”

Once they all spelled out a wish in a whisper, the girls opened their eyes.

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After spotting the Precures heading towards the Castle Planet through the surveillance satellite, Professor Sabaaku appeared in Dune's throne room in the castle to report it.

"Hm. Didn't take as long as I thought," Dune's lips curved into a smug smile.

"King Dune, I will personally make sure that the Precures are eliminated before they can set a foot on the Castle Planet."

"Sure. Do it."

Sabaaku bowed to him, then left the room.

Dune stood up from his throne, and went to the next room over.

In the middle of the room, Kaoruko could be seen chained to a chair; as Dune entered, she looked at him with contempt.

A devious smile flashed over his face as he snapped two of his fingers on his right hand. Then, a shot of Sabaaku's hideout as well as several other places of the Castle Planet came into view on the wall of monitors in front of Kaoruko.

One of them showed the entrance of the hideout, where an entire Snackey army was awaiting the arrival of the Precures to ambush them. On another one, Kumojacky and Cobraja could be seen waiting for the Precures on the passage that connected the hideout with the Castle Planet. Finally, Professor Sabaaku appeared in his chambers, as he was taking out Dark Precure from the incubator he had put her in to heal her injuries and recover her strength after suffering defeat from Cure Moonlight. The camera zoomed in on her face while she said something to Sabaaku. The hatred she was harbouring towards Cure Moonlight was plainly visible in her eyes.

"Fufufufu, I love the look in Dark Precure's eyes, don't you, Cure Flower? We are about to witness a very fun show, as the Precures meet their end soon."

"..."

Kaoruko remained quiet as she kept glaring at Dune.

\*\*\*

Leaving behind the now ashen Earth, Coupe was flying through space, when the Desert Apostles hideout came into his view. Behind the base, there was a long bridge leading to the Castle Planet.

“So that’s the headquarters of the Desert Apostles and the Castle Planet,” Cure Blossom noted, with Cure Moonlight affirming:

“We are going to rescue Kaoruko-san and defeat Dune without fail.”

“Yes!” The others nodded tensely.

Coupe sped up, then landed in front of the entrance, where a desert lay.

Just as the Precures jumped off Coupe’s back, the gates opened up, and a swarm of Snackeys spilled out of the doorway like an avalanche.

The Precures began to strike them with kicks and punches.

However, no matter how many Snackeys they managed to take out, their number seemed unending. Suddenly, a huge shadow crept over the Snackeys’ heads: Coupe. Stomping his feet to the ground, he reached forward with his two long arms, then let out a roar as he wheeled around.

A moment later, the Snackeys were blown away.

“Coupe-sama is saying he will take care of them~!”

“We should go save Cure Flower in the meanwhile!”

The Precures nodded at the fairies, then made a high jump to enter the hideout.

They also met Snackeys inside the base, but they could easily manage them. Taking them out through and through, the Precures crossed the building, finally reaching the long bridge connecting the hideout with the Castle Planet.

“This is the moment of truth. The Precures’ pride is at the stake. We must fight to the bitter end!”

Moved by Cure Moonlight’s powerful words of determination, Cure Blossom nodded firmly, then hurried after her on the bridge.

Midway, they were stopped by Kumojacky and Cobraja, who were already waiting for them.

Similarly to the fallen Sasorina, the two of them were beginning to remember their human hearts due to the exposure to the Precures' holy light during the purification of the Desertrians, and were starting to question the Desert Apostles' world domination objectives.

Not that they concerned themselves too much with the outcome. As warriors themselves, all they cared about was to have a good fight against the Precures.

The parties kept glaring at each other, until Kumojacky and Cobraja spoke:

“To fight with all we have until one of us falls... this is what I've been waiting for.”

“I want a beautiful fight with you. I don't care about the Desert Apostles anymore. Come on, let us settle it elegantly.”

With that, the pair fiercely charged at them. Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom were not even ready, when Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine leapt forward.

“Marine, Sunshine?!” they shouted in surprise.

“We will take care of them!”

“You two should find Kaoruko-san, quickly!”

Marine and Sunshine replied, as they both entered a heated hand-to-hand combat with Kumojacky and Cobraja.

“But...” Cure Blossom hesitated, but Marine put her down:

“Don't worry! We'll be right after you, I promise! Or are you saying you're doubting us?”

“...Never!” Cure Blossom answered, putting a smile to Marine and Sunshine's faces.

“A Precure's strength lies in the bond of mutual trust. Let's go!”

“Yes!”

Moonlight and Blossom made for the end of the bridge.

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After breaking into the Castle Planet, Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom continued their way further inside, taking out any roaming Snackkeys along the way.

Dune was watching their every step through the monitors in the throne room from his seat.

“Let me see how you struggle, Precures,” he smiled confidently.

Kaoruko, too, kept a keen eye on them, as well as on the other monitors showing the fights between Marine and Kumojacky and Sunshine and Cobraja at separate locations.

Suddenly, Professor Sabaaku entered the room.

“Sabaaku...!”

“...”

They were finally face to face with each other.

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Elsewhere, Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom found themselves in a Colosseum inside the castle’s courtyard. This was a place Dune had built for the Snackkeys, where war prisoners kidnapped from the planets he conquered would be made to fight against each other until one of them lost their lives.

Traces of blood from those occasions were still visible on the stone paving here and there.

“Where are we...?” Cure Blossom and Chypre muttered, when suddenly, an eerie feeling struck Cure Moonlight, which made her lift her gaze up at the tallest of the stone pillars encircling the Colosseum.

It was Dark Precure standing on the top of the pillar, the giant-looking moon illuminating her from behind.

“Dark Precure!” Blossom cried out, ready to strike back, but Dark Precure just continued to glare at Moonlight, as if Blossom wasn’t even there.

“...Blossom, go.” Startled, Cure Blossom looked at Cure Moonlight. “I have something that needs to be settled. With Dark Precure... and my former self.”

“Your former... self?” Blossom asked back, and Moonlight gave a small nod in response.

“The one who didn’t believe in friendship, lost Cologne, and was beaten by Dark Precure... Defeating Dark Precure would mean I have risen over that part of myself,” she said, still staring at Dark Precure.

Seeing her determined expression from the side, Cure Blossom said nothing more.

Moonlight smiled.

“Now go find Kaoruko-san.”

“Yes!”

Bolting across the Colosseum, Blossom and Chypre headed towards the inside of the castle.

Not even sparing them a glance, Dark Precure descended from the pillar, landing in front of Moonlight.

“The time has come for the darkness to swallow the light. And this time, I shall make you disappear without a trace!”

Declaring so, Dark Precure violently charged at Cure Moonlight.

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Briefly looking over at Cure Moonlight and Dark Precure on the screen, Kaoruko sent an icy glare at Professor Sabaaku.

“If it wasn’t for you and Dark Precure...”

“...”

Sabaaku still kept his mouth shut.

“The girls told me that Dark Precure said she was an artificial Precure. It’s you, am I right? Her creator, I mean.” Even when Kaoruko asked directly, he remained quiet. “Why did you create her in Cure Moonlight’s image?”

Sabaaku finally broke the silence:



“In her image?”

“Even with different hairstyles, she is Cure Moonlight’s spitting image,” Kaoruko pointed out, and Sabaaku’s shoulders trembled ever so slightly. The discreet movement didn’t escape Kaoruko’s attention. “Something has been bothering me ever since. Why did Cure Moonlight... Yuri-chan come back unscathed from that battle...?”

The moment Yuri’s name hit his ears, Sabaaku put his right hand to his mask. His perturbation was obvious, and Kaoruko could tell so.

“If you hadn’t stopped Dark Precure, you could have declared total victory over her. Yet, you didn’t do that... or rather, you *could* not do that, right? Something was keeping you from it...”

“Stop that nonsense...”

Sabaaku averted his gaze from Kaoruko, and turned back to the monitor showing Cure Moonlight and Dark Precure’s fight.

“Why won’t you look into my eyes? You can’t be...”

But before Kaoruko could finish the sentence, Sabaaku turned on his heels.

“Bossnackey, you deal with the rest! I am going to go see with my own eyes how Dark Precure crushes Cure Moonlight,” he said, leaving the room.

As she watched him go, Kaoruko’s suspicions were confirmed. Professor Sabaaku was Tsukikage Hideaki; Yuri’s father.

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Professor Sabaaku took a seat in the upper row of the Colosseum’s spectator area, where he could overlook the heated battle that was unfolding between Cure Moonlight and Dark Precure.

All he did was watching the two fight.

The competitors in the middle of the Colosseum were unaware of his presence.

The fight was going completely evenly, then suddenly, both of them jumped to the opposite side. As their gazes met amidst taking ragged breaths, Dark Precure asked:

“Who are you fighting for?”

“It’s not for a specific person. It’s for all living things and to protect every Heart Flower.”

“Yeah, the mission of the Precures... How stupid!” In the blink of an eye, the pair collided and separated again. “I am fighting for someone I love.”

“Love? But I thought you didn't have a heart.”

“You were wrong! I’ve been fighting for Professor Sabaaku all this time! And somebody who has no one to love will not defeat me!”

Cure Moonlight’s face turned surprised, and the next moment, Dark Precure attacked her with incredible force. Her inner feelings took over her fist, and the attacks kept showering at Cure Moonlight, who had no choice but to take defence. Dark Precure was slowly cornering her.

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Around the same time, Cure Blossom and Chypre had almost reached the room where Kaoruko was being held captive.

“Grandma!” Cure Blossom called out, when she heard Kaoruko’s voice from the room at the end of the corridor:

“Blossom!”

“That way~!”

The instant they bursted into the room, they were confronted by two Bossnackeys at once, who – worthy of their title as “boss” –, proved to be pretty tough.

While Blossom was busy fighting with one of them, the other one took advantage of the situation to ambush her.

“Blossom, look out!”

Cure Blossom managed to evade the attack, when suddenly, rose petals began to fall from the sky.

The next minute, Coupe appeared in his form of a young man, taking down both Bossnackeys in the matter of a second.

“Coupe-sama!” Cure Blossom and Chypre cried out in joy.

“Thank you, Coupe,” Kaoruko said, and Coupe immediately turned back to his usual form.

“Haah...”

Chypre wasn't pleased seeing Blossom sigh.

“This is no time for disappointed looks~!”

“You're right! Coupe-sama, please take care of Grandma! I'm going back to help Moonlight!”

As Cure Blossom was about to leave the room, Kaoruko shouted after her:

“Please, Blossom! Don't let Sabaaku and Moonlight fight each other!”

Blossom's eyes went wide in surprise at the unexpected request.

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Cure Blossom and Chypre got to the Colosseum to witness Cure Moonlight bringing down Dark Precure with an overhead throw, getting out of her disadvantage.

“Moonlight!”

“Blossom! Why did you come back?”

“Grandma is safe now. Let me help with the rest.”

Dark Precure slowly began to draw closer to the pair, a confident smile on her face.

“Blossom, I'm grateful for the thought. But this fight alone, I want to face it myself. This is how it was written for me and Dark Precure.”

Nodding in understanding, Cure Blossom stepped away from Cure Moonlight.

The fierce battle began anew. The roles of attacking and retreating kept alternating between the two, but as the fight carried on, Cure Moonlight gradually began to gain the upperhand. That was when it happened.

Professor Sabaaku made a sudden move.

He fired a shot of dark energy from his palm towards Cure Moonlight.

Cure Blossom, who caught sight, shouted:

“Look out!” and she jumped in front of the approaching projectile to shield Moonlight.

Knocked down by the direct hit, she tumbled to the ground with a scream.

“Blossom!”

Cure Moonlight turned her gaze to the motionless Cure Blossom. Simultaneously, Dark Precure looked up at the spectator area.

“Professor Sabaaku!” she yelled triumphantly, and as if it had given her power, she charged towards Cure Moonlight to deliver a violent kick, while Moonlight was trying to rush to Blossom’s side.

Taken by surprise, it sent Cure Moonlight flying, and she crashed into the wall in front of the spectator area.

Sabaaku jumped down from the audience seats, and held out his right towards her half-conscious figure. He conjured dark energy in his palm without hesitation.

Just in that moment, Cure Blossom got to her feet, and stood before him once again.

“This is their battle only, please stay out of it!”

“Nuisance! Out of my way!”

Sabaaku shot another energy bullet. Once again, Cure Blossom was thrown backwards with a scream.

Even so, she mustered up her strength and tried to get up, but her body wouldn’t obey.

Sabaaku began to gather dark energy in his right fist for the next attack without mercy.

“Stop~!”

Leaping forward, Chypre stood before Cure Blossom to protect her from Sabaaku.

“You think a fairy can stop that?! There!”

He fired the blast from his hand.

However, Cure Moonlight, who saw him in the middle of her own fight, instantly left Dark Precure on the spot to jump in front of the incoming attack protectively.

An explosion followed, blowing away Cure Moonlight with a scream.

“M-Moonlight!” The cry broke out from Cure Blossom and Chypre at the same time.

“D-Didn’t I tell you not to involve your fairies in the fights...?”

It took all her energy for Cure Moonlight to stand up, only for Dark Precure to rush forward in the next second, and assault her with a series of strikes and kicks. Moonlight defended herself as best as she could, but as the damage done to Dark Precure was negligible in contrast, she soon overpowered Moonlight, and with a sharp roundhouse kick to her abdomen, Moonlight was sent flying through the air, coughing up blood.

“How weak you are, Moonlight!”

Dark Precure held out her right arm, and using the dark energy she summoned within her palm, she fired. Unable to evade it, Cure Moonlight was sent flying once again, and remained motionless on the ground.

“Moonlight!”

As Cure Blossom was about to rush to her side, Sabaaku suddenly blocked her path.

“You will be fighting against me! Take this!” With his hand, he sent dark energy at her. Blossom let out a scream before the attack knocked her off of her feet, leaving her paralysed on the ground. “Fufufufu, you are indeed the weakest Precure in history!”

Sabaaku was approaching her with the intention to take her out for good, when Cure Blossom’s hand moved.

“...No... Even if slowly... I have changed...”

Not far from her on the ground, Cure Moonlight's hand stirred as well, as if in response to her voice.

"...That's right. I have changed too... I am not alone anymore... I am fighting... with everyone's feelings inside me."

Dark Precure smiled mockingly.

"Feelings? Stupid."

Cure Blossom raised her head at those words.

"It's not stupid... Even if I was powerless by myself... The help and support I got from my friends... made me stronger!" she said, slowly getting to her feet.

"Hmph! Then I will show you that you don't need anyone's 'feelings'!"

As Dark Precure's clenched fist glowed up with dark energy, Cure Moonlight also lifted her head, saying:

"You know nothing about the power of people's feelings!"

"What?!"

"I'll let you have a taste... of the feelings of us Precures."

With that, Cure Moonlight was finally standing on her feet as well.

Just then, Cure Blossom made for Sabaaku with all her strength, directing sharp kicks and strikes at him. Even someone so powerful as him was driven into a defensive position by the sheer force of the attack.

"H-How do you have so much left in you?!"

Cure Moonlight too, came at Dark Precure forcefully.

Dark Precure instantly sent an energy projectile at her, but Cure Moonlight dodged the attack, then, as she drew in, she smacked Dark Precure on the forehead with a well-directed palm heel strike.

Dark Precure fell on her back, but stood up immediately. However, soon enough, Cure Moonlight struck again, and Dark Precure couldn't but guard herself.

"She's cornering me? How?"

To break out of the disadvantageous position, Dark Precure jumped backwards, summoning her Dark Tact.

Undauntedly, Cure Moonlight pulled out her Moon Tact as well.

“Dark Power Fortissimo!”

“Precure Floral Power Fortissimo!”

The dark light and the holy light enveloped them at the same time, and the pair clashed against each other at an incredible speed.

A huge explosion occurred, and passing each other inside the smoke, both parties landed on the opposite end.

However, in the next moment, electric sparks shook Dark Precure’s body, and she collapsed to the ground with a thud.

Even so, she tried to struggle to her feet, using her Tact for support, but was unable to stand up.

“It’s time that we settle this for once and for all,” Cure Moonlight said quietly, raising her Tact. “Flowers, shine! Precure Silver Forte Wave!”

In the moment the holy light concentrated in the tip left her Tact, Sabaaku, abandoning his fight with Cure Blossom, jumped in front of Dark Precure to protect her.

Hit by the holy light, Sabaaku’s mask broke in half and dropped to the ground.

“Uugh...” Sabaaku covered his face with both hands, and let out a wail. “Uwaaaaaah!”

As he fell on his knees, his arms dropped to his sides, revealing his face.

The face of Tsukikage Hideaki.

“Dad...!”

Cure Moonlight stood there in astonishment.

Hideaki slowly raised his head.

“Yuri...”

Cure Blossom and Chypre watched in shock as the two continued to stare at each other.

“So Sabaaku is Yuri-san’s father...! That’s why Grandma asked me not to let them fight,” Cure Blossom murmured, and Chypre nodded.

Tears welled up in Cure Moonlight’s eyes.

“Dad!” she cried, running over to embrace Hideaki.

“Yuri... I don’t deserve to hold you in my arms.” Hideaki turned his face from her. “...The weakness in my own heart is to blame for everything,” he continued, gazing out at the desert the Earth has become. “The Great Heart Tree that guards all life and every heart... I used to believe I could unravel its secrets and make everyone happy. Then, four years ago, I finally found the Great Heart Tree among the mountains outside Paris, and began my research. I was so impressed by coming into contact with the incredible vitality of the Great Heart Tree, it truly shook me to my core. However, the more I researched, the more I realised that current scientific means are not enough to solve the Great Heart Tree’s mysteries.”

Cure Moonlight listened to Hideaki’s words in silence.

“Happiness is something each and every individual must strive to obtain for themselves gradually... I didn’t even try to understand something so simple. When my research came to a standstill, Dune appeared before me and said that with the Great Heart Tree, controlling others would be possible. He deceived me with his words saying he would support my research with any amount of money if I joined him. My heart wavered. Dune took advantage of that and forced this mask on me. From then on, I became his underling under the name of Sabaaku, who wanted to destroy the world... Yuri, I...”

At that moment, Dark Precure rose from the ground.

“Cure Moonlight! Get away from Professor Sabaaku!”

She desperately staggered towards Hideaki in pain.

Cure Moonlight was ready to fight back, when Hideaki put his hand on her shoulder to stop her.

“Dad...?”

“Ever since I had put on this mask, I have been feeling my human memories fade away by the day. It scared me that I could soon forget even your and your mother’s face. So I began to cultivate the cells I had extracted from the Great Heart Tree, and using the scientific knowledge of the Desert Apostles and a DNA excerpt from your hair, I created Dark Precure.



I thought if I had her by my side, I wouldn't forget about you... But in the end, it looks like her creation only brought torment to you."

Hideaki let go of Cure Moonlight's shoulders, and stepped towards the unsteadily approaching Dark Precure.

"A puppet with no heart, who exists solely to defeat Cure Moonlight... But it's okay now, Dark Precure. It's all okay now," he gently embraced her. Dark Precure's eyes softened. "Yuri, this girl is... your younger sister."

"...!"

Cure Moonlight stared at Hideaki dumbfoundedly.

"I made my own daughters fight each other... Dark Precure... You are my daughter."

Then, Dark Precure's body began to glow.

"Father..." she smiled happily, and glanced at Cure Moonlight.

Moonlight didn't know what to make of her triumphant expression.

At that moment, the half Precure Seed Dark Precure was clutching in her left hand fell to the ground.

Simultaneously, as Hideaki was holding her in his arms, she closed her eyes with a look of content on her face, her body turning into tiny fragments of light that dispersed into the night sky.

"Dark Precure..." Hideaki whispered, when the sound of clapping hit his ears.

The group glanced up at the spectator area's top row, and realised it was Dune giving an applause.

"Dune!" Hideaki sent him an icy glare. Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom backed him on both sides, copying his gesture.

"How melodramatic. Ten out of ten."

"Ggh..." Hideaki bit into his lip.

Dune slowly came down the stairs.

“Professor Tsukikage, days were fun with you around. But now, with the Great Heart Tree gone and the Earth a desert, I don’t need my clown anymore.” Raising his right, Dune immediately summoned dark energy in the shape of a giant glowing sphere. “Adieu, Professor Tsukikage!”

As he brought down his arm, the sphere began to speed towards Hideaki.

Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom both moved at the same time to block the energy ball, when the dark energy swirling inside the sphere suddenly burst out.

Accompanied by a scream, the detonation sent the pair back, reversing them to their pre-transformation white dresses.

“Futile! You’re way too weak!”

Yuri and Tsubomi tried to get up, but having taken too much damage, they couldn’t move a muscle.

Smiling arrogantly, Dune raised his right hand again to collect dark energy for the finishing blow.

“That’s enough, Dune!” Hideaki shouted.

“The big fish eats the little fish. Where do you not agree?” Dune spouted sarcastically, then released the sinisterly glowing energy sphere.

Holding out his arms, Hideaki jumped in front of the girls to stop the projectile. Stopping a light ball powerful enough to undo a Precure’s transformation while not wearing the mask was a reckless act on his end.

“Dad!”

Hideaki looked back, and even smiled when Yuri called out.

“Yuri... Take care of your mother... for me,” he said, then turned back again. In the next moment, Hideaki was swallowed by the dark energy bursting forth from the light sphere, ripping him to pieces.

Without so much as a single hair remaining of him, Hideaki left this world, taking all of his sins with him.

“...Dad.” Yuri fell to her knees, her head dropping in anguish, her shoulders shaking. Once the trembling stopped, she glared at Dune with the flames of hatred burning in her eyes. “Dune!”

“Are you going to take out your hatred on me too?” Dune asked, looking like he was truly enjoying the situation.

Not taking her glance off of him, Yuri slowly rose to her feet.

“I’ll never forgive you!” The words erupted from deep within, but as soon as she took a step towards Dune, she felt it.

Tsubomi’s grasp on her right arm.

“Let go,” Yuri said, still staring right ahead.

Tears welling up in her eyes, Tsubomi yelled:

“No! You can’t fight out of pure anger and hatred...”

“But I hate him from the bottom of my heart... He took my father and Cologne from me... And if I can draw strength from my hatred, that’s fine by me!”

Tsubomi was desperate to stop Yuri from taking another step, even when the tears were flooding her eyes.

“Stop saying such nonsense! The Yuri-san I love would never say these things!” Yuri finally turned around to look at Tsubomi at the harsh tone. “If we fight with hatred, it’s a loss for everyone, don’t you see? A person is done for once they let sadness and hatred tear them down! What was it that we have worked so hard as Precures for all this time? What was it that Cologne and your father have taught you?!”

Even so, Yuri tried to slip past.

“Tsukikage Yuri!” Upon hearing her name as such from Tsubomi of all people, Yuri gasped. “Cure Moonlight, my role model!”

Tsubomi extended her clasped left hand towards Yuri, and silently opened it. She was holding the Precure Seed fragment Dark Precure had dropped earlier.

“...!”

Yuri stared at it in stupefaction.

“What you should do and what you are fighting for... you should reflect on that for a minute!”

Tsubomi's words stabbed into Yuri's heart. Then, they gradually permeated into every fibre of her being.

Yuri took off the pendant from her neck with her own Precure Seed, and squeezed Tsubomi's hand, who was still holding the other half. The two halves became one in her grasp.

At that point, Cure Marine entered the Colosseum with Coffret, accompanied by Cure Sunshine with Potpourri, and Kaoruko with Coupe.

"Tsubomi! Yuri-san!" Marine called out.

Dune's ever-present confident smile turned into one of mild surprise.

"Hoh. So Kumojacky and Cobraja kicked the bucket..."

The new-joiners ran up to Yuri and Tsubomi.

"I'm so happy you're alright!" Tsubomi said with a smile, and Cure Sunshine also gave her a smile in return.

"Not to say it was easy. But Cobraja and Kumojacky are both purified now."

Kaoruko and Coupe were watching Dune prudently.

"Cure Flower, what are you bunch fighting so hard for? The Great Heart Tree is already dead."

"The Great Heart Tree is still alive," Kaoruko retorted, to which Dune let out a cry of surprise.

"What?!"

"As long as there are people who don't give up hope, and as long as there are people who have faith that the Precures will defeat you, the Great Heart Tree will revive time and time again."

"I see. That's interesting. So I just have to defeat you in front of those people and the Great Heart Tree, is what you're saying. Well then, why don't we settle it right then and there? I'll be waiting." And with those words, Dune disappeared.

"Did this jerk chicken out now that there are four of us?" Cure Marine said, only for Tsubomi to dismiss her right away:

"Surely not. Dune is much stronger than we have imagined."

“That much?” Cure Marine said in disbelief, to which Cure Sunshine replied:

“Can’t you see it by looking at Tsubomi and Yuri-san?”

“It was a close call for them both~. If Professor Sabaaku didn’t intervene...”

Before Chypre could finish, Kaoruko turned to Yuri:

“Your father saved you, right?”

“...”

Yuri nodded wordlessly.

“But in exchange, Yuri-san’s father...” Tsubomi’s voice broke.

“What are you talking about? I don’t get it,” Cure Marine asked. Kaoruko gently put an arm around Yuri’s shoulder as she explained:

“Sabaaku was Yuri-chan’s father, Professor Tsukikage.”

“What?!” Unaware of the situation at hand, Marine and Sunshine exclaimed in shock, looking at the still weeping Yuri speechlessly.

“Professor Tsukikage... was controlled by Dune through his mask,” Tsubomi explained. Kaoruko confirmed each word with a nod, holding Yuri in her arms tightly.

At that moment, Coupe, who was watching Yuri with a gentle gaze silently, opened his mouth:

“You should take a rest, girls.”

“Huh?”

All eyes turned to Coupe.

“Did I mishear, or Coupe-sama really talked now?” Cure Marine asked. Cure Sunshine tilted her head.

“Wow. So Coupe-sama can talk.”

“Coupe-sama always talks when he’s with us~.”

“He’s just not a loudmouth like Erika.”

“We’ve been telling you he’s cool!”

Coupe scratched his head shyly at the fairies’ reveal.

“I understand that Coupe-sama wants us to rest, but we are on the Castle Planet. There’s no place here where we can rest,” Tsubomi said, then Kaoruko smiled.

“That’s okay. The fairies will guide you there.”

“Follow me, everyone!”

Potpourri took the lead, and jumped into the sizable heart mark on Coupe’s chest, with Chypre and Coffret in tow.

“Your turn now!” Kaoruko prompted, and the girls jumped in as well.

As they did so, they found themselves in a separate space inside Coupe’s body, where flower fields reached over the horizon, butterflies danced in the air, and birds chirped under the blue sky.

“W-What the...?!”

The girls could only stand there in astonishment.

“There is a sanctuary inside Coupe-sama’s body~!” Chypre bragged.

“So when you disappeared inside Coupe’s body so often, is this where you went?”

The fairies nodded, then Potpourri pointed to another direction, saying:

“There’s also an onsen over there!”

“An onsen?!”

As they looked in the direction Potpourri was pointing, they saw steam rising from behind a pile of rocks.

“Awesome!”

Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine transformed back without a second thought, and ran off, squealing happily.

“We should go too, Yuri-san.”

Urged by Tsubomi, Yuri and the fairies followed along as well.

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The four girls and the fairies seemed to enjoy their bath under the open sky.

The water was just the right temperature to refresh their tired parts after the draining battle against the Desert Apostles.

“Feels so nice~!”

“Heaven itself~!”

“I can feel the fatigue slowly leaving my body.”

Forgetting about the final battle against Dune that was awaiting them, Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki were enjoying their bath to the fullest, but Yuri couldn’t share their joy.

The emotions rushed her as she looked at her Precure Seed, which was now one whole piece. If her father hadn’t fallen under Dune’s control, Dark Precure would never have been born. Her father may have called her a puppet who had no heart, but Yuri didn’t think of her like that. After all, the reason why Dark Precure even saw a threat in her was because she wanted to be loved by her father and keep him to herself.

If they hadn’t been enemies, she may have even accepted her as her younger sister, and they could have found so many things to talk about. When she thought about it like that, she felt sorry for Dark Precure. At least disappearing in her father’s arms brought her salvation.

While Yuri was lost in such thoughts, she suddenly heard Tsubomi’s voice:

“What’s wrong, Yuri-san?”

As Yuri snapped back to reality and looked up, she noticed that everyone was looking at her worriedly.

“Nothing. Please, forgive my father... for ending up as Dune’s underling.”

Yuri lowered her head, trying not to show the sadness on her face, when Tsubomi came closer, tears welling up in her eyes.

“Yuri-san... You have nothing to apologise for. You are the one who’s hurt the most after all...”

She embraced Yuri, letting the tears streak down her face. Erika stepped closer too.

“You don’t have to hold it in! It’s okay to cry all you want when you’re sad!” she said, hugging Yuri as she burst into tears. Itsuki moved nearer too, saying:

“I don’t know what I can say... The only thing I can do is cry together with you,” she sobbed, embracing Yuri.

The fairies flew over with tears in their eyes, and held onto Yuri as well.

“Thank you... everyone...” The tears she had been holding in till now burst forth, running down Yuri’s cheeks. In that moment, she let out a heart-wrenching cry. “Uh... Ugh... Uwaaaaahh!!”

At the realisation that Yuri had waited more than three years for her father, only for him to die so gruesomely in front of her eyes, the others couldn’t but share her tears.

They didn’t even know how long they stayed like that. Eventually, they calmed down, yet, the tears didn’t stop flowing.

Then, Erika mumbled to herself:

“How true. You can’t run out of tears.”

“Erika...” Tsubomi whispered, then Erika wiped her eyes, saying:

“I realised this a long time ago. Tears are there to make you stronger, you know? There were so many times I felt insecure next to Momo-nee, but whenever I cried by myself, it somehow gave back my spirit.”

“It’s the same with me. When I was little, my father and mother were busy with work, and I didn’t have any friends, so I often cried by myself. But once I stopped crying, I felt as if a weight was lifted off my shoulders.”

“Me too. I couldn’t bear the thought of living a life where I suppressed who I really was. But it felt like that weak part of myself washed away together with my tears.”

Yuri silently listened to the three of them. The tears were gone from her eyes.



“Maybe... we have become stronger now, thanks to my father.”

Watching Yuri's expression settle, Tsubomi spoke:

“Yuri-san, I'm sorry for saying something so out of line back then.”

Yuri shook her head.

“Your kindness and compassionate heart made me remember what's important.”

At that moment, Erika stood up, splattering the water around her.

“It's kind of funny, though! For mere 14 year-old beauties to stand up against Dune to save the world.”

Everyone stared at her abruptly, with Coffret slightly tilting his head to the side.

“Beauties... depends who.”

“Hey, Coffret, what do you mean by that?!”

Looking at her slyly, Chypre remarked:

“Besides, Yuri is 17~.”

“Ah... I forgot, Yuri-san,” Erika replied, scratching her head. Yuri chuckled.

“Oh, Erika!” Tsubomi said, then everyone burst out laughing. They were all thinking about how good it was that Erika was their friend. They didn't even know how many times her optimistic attitude helped them so far.

“After we defeat Dune and restore the Earth to how it was, what are you going to do?” Tsubomi asked. Erika immediately answered:

“I want to design lots and lots of clothes! Then I'll become a professional fashion designer, and start my own brand eventually!”

As Erika clenched her fist tightly, Itsuki smiled, saying:

“Sounds good! I'm sure you can do it, Erika.”

“And you, Itsuki?” It was Erika's turn to ask.

“Hm... I want to continue practicing martial arts at the Myoudouin school, but also challenge myself to various other things.”

“For example?” Tsubomi asked, leaning closer.

“Well... It’s a secret.”

Tsubomi and Erika nearly fell forward at the reply.

“Why can’t you tell us!” Erika grumbled, when Potpourri declared self-importantly:

“Potpourri knowsh. But won’t tell you.”

“Geez!” Erika puffed her cheeks, making everyone laugh again.

“What about you, Yuri-san?” Itsuki asked. Yuri mused over the answer for a moment.

“Well... I want to take care of my mother, and follow in my father’s footsteps and become a botanist.”

“That sounds very much like you, Yuri-san,” Tsubomi said, and the others nodded.

“And what do *you* want to do, Tsubomi~?” Chypre asked. Tsubomi replied slightly bashfully:

“I want to work in the greening industry and plant trees and flowers in the desert. And if I succeed, I want to visit every corner of the universe and fill all planets with flowers!”

“That’s our best friend alright! She dreams big!” Erika praised her, but Tsubomi shook her right index finger, saying:

“Hey, hey, hey. Not best friends, best friends *forever*!” Once again, they all laughed. “Well then, everyone! Let’s go and take down Dune, for the Earth and for our dreams!” Tsubomi said, and the others nodded in agreement, standing up. Then, Yuri added:

“Let’s fight with love like true Precures instead of hatred!”

Her expression was bright, as though she had thrown away all her ill feelings. Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki grinned, and their answer was a loud and clear:

“Yes!”

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As the girls and the fairies left the world inside Coupe, they queued up before him and Kaoruko.

“We are physically and mentally refreshed now, thanks to Coupe-sama!” Yuri spoke.

“Thank you so much!” they all said, bowing their heads. The always expressionless Coupe smiled, blinking his eyes.

Kaoruko smiled as well as she remarked:

“Look at all these smiles! Well then, time to get ready.”

The girls nodded, their faces reflecting resolve.

“Go, Precure Seed~!” Chypre commenced, soon followed by Coffret and Potpourri as they all summoned the Precure Seeds for their partners. Yuri inserted her now complete Precure Seed into the lid of the Heart Pot.

“Precure! Open my heart!”

The four of them transformed into Precures together.

“The flower blooming from the earth... Cure Blossom!”

“The flower swaying in the sea breeze... Cure Marine!”

“The flower bathing in the rays of the sun... Cure Sunshine!”

“The flower glistening in the light of the moon... Cure Moonlight!”

Finally, as a confirmation of their resolve, they took their finishing pose.

“Heartcatch Precure!”

“The fate of the Earth is in your hands. Now, let us go to the Great Heart Tree!” Kaoruko said, and the girls and the fairies nodded, jumping upon Coupe’s back. Kaoruko was the last one to get on. “We are counting on you, Coupe!”

With a blink of his eyes, Coupe took off, heading towards the sky.

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Dune was waiting for the Precures to arrive by the remains of the Great Heart Tree, when his eyes suddenly widened.

Coupe entered the atmosphere with the Precures on his back, his body engulfed in holy light.

Once he landed on a piece of earth floating around the Heart Tree, the Precures got off his back.

“Fufufu... I have been waiting for you, Precures! This place will become your grave, and the people whose Heart Flowers haven’t withered yet will despair, and then, Earth will become all mine.”

“Dune, why are you so obsessed with Earth? I’m sure there are other planets in the universe that are more suitable for you Desert Apostles,” Cure Moonlight inquired.

“That’s because Earth *is* the most suitable planet to spread my hatred.”

“To spread your hatred?” It was Cure Marine’s turn to ask.

“This is the planet my father, whom I despise more than anything in this world, wanted to obtain. Which is why I’m going to dominate and defile it with my own hands.”

“Why... do you hate your father more than anything in this world?” Cure Blossom asked with an expression of shock.

“Well, not exactly in *this* world anymore. You see, I killed him.”

The unexpected revelation robbed the Precures of words.

“You’re gonna die soon anyway. So I might as well tell you about it. My father, who was the leader of the Desert Apostles, planned to kill me, the first-born heir, by the orchestration of my stepmother. To my luck, my nanny found out about the plan, and sneaked me out of the castle. However, the pursuers found us, and killed my nanny in front of my eyes. As my seven year old self was running for his life, I came across a certain building, where I took refuge. It was a church of an evil deity, and I offered a prayer to the statue of the devil they worshipped there. I asked him for power to kill my father, in exchange for my soul.”

“ ... ”

The Precures listened to him with their faces completely still.

“Thanks to him, I obtained infinite power, enough to tear my father, my stepmother and my half-brother to pieces, with my own two hands.”

Tears appeared in the eyes of the Precures.

“What a pitiful person...” Cure Blossom muttered.

“Hey, hey, isn’t this the part where you should applaud?” Dune grinned. “And now that I told you the bedtime tale before your eternal sleep, I say we should get to business soon.”

In the next moment, dark energy shot out from Dune’s body, and he attacked the Precures with incredible speed.

The fairies quickly turned into cloaks, wrapping themselves around their partners’ shoulders. Cure Moonlight tapped the brooch on her shoulder to conjure a cloak for herself as well.

“Here we go!”

In answer to Moonlight’s call, the four Precures charged at Dune, and the fight started right up in the air.

However, be it a punch or a kick, Dune dodged every attack coming at him.

“You wanna beat me with snail speed?”

“Shut that big mouth! Waaa-aaa-aaah!” Cure Marine launched a series of punches at him, which Dune evaded with a bored expression. “Haah, Haah..”

While Marine was trying to catch her breath, Dune suddenly got behind her back and delivered a violent kick at her.

Screaming, Marine pummeled into a chunk of earth, a cloud of dust rising after the crash.

“Marine!” Cure Moonlight and Cure Blossom cried out, while Cure Sunshine sent a cold glare at Dune, and dashed towards him furiously.

Sunshine’s kicks and hits showered on Dune in succession. However, he escaped each strike, then suddenly disappeared from sight.

“Where did he go?!”

Cure Sunshine scanned her surroundings, but Dune was nowhere to be found.

“Sunshine, above!”

As Cure Moonlight called out, Sunshine glanced up overhead with a gasp; Dune came swooping down at her, his palm glowing sinisterly.

“Sunflower Aegis!”

Cure Sunshine stretched out her arms immediately to summon a shield of light. However, she took a direct hit when Dune’s dark energy ball shattered her barrier.

She let out a scream, and crashed into a piece of earth, sending up a cloud of dust in the air in a similar fashion as Marine.

“Sunshine!” Cure Blossom shouted, and stared at Dune, ready to attack him, when Cure Moonlight caught her arm, stopping her. “Moonlight?”

“We’ll never beat him if we come at him separately. We have to fight with our hearts united now!”

“You’re right!”

The two of them charged at Dune at the same time, then splitted into the opposite directions right in front of him. In the next moment, they unleashed the flawless combo of a palm heel strike and a kick at him. Dune wasn’t stupid enough to believe he could dodge that, so he chose to guard himself.

“Hooh, you’re not half bad.”

In the meantime, Cure Marine and Cure Sunshine got to their feet, and both inserted a red Heart Seed into their Heart Perfumes.

“Holy Perfume shining in red!”

“Speed me up with this spray!”

Once they applied the red fragrance on themselves, the red light surrounded their bodies.

“Come on, Sunshine!”

“Yeah!”

Soaring up with the speed of light, the pair joined Cure Blossom and Cure Moonlight to corner Dune.

“Waaa-aaa-aaa-aaah!”

While Dune was busy defending himself against a series of punches from Marine, Sunshine quickly encircled him from behind.

“Taaaaaah!!”

Going all out, she delivered a powerful kick to his side.

Dune slammed into one of the pieces of earth floating around.

“Now!” Blossom shouted, and wasting no time, everyone pulled out their weapons, linking them together.

“Heartcatch Mirage!” The Heartcatch Mirage sprang forth from the heart mark on Coupe’s chest, who was watching them from one of the earth chunks nearby, then it flew over to the group in the air. “Mirror, o mirror! Lend us Precures your power!”

Cure Blossom inserted the Powerup Seed in the middle of the Heartcatch Mirage, in which moment, the keys around it, imbued with the theme colours of each Precure – pink, blue, gold and silver – shined up. Blossom blended the invoked four powers with the Powerup Seed using the Heartcatch Pen, and combined them into a single source of power. The mirror on the Heartcatch Mirage then began to shine, and a Precure flower appeared in its reflection.

“The flowers shining across the world! Heartcatch Precure! Super Silhouette!” they shouted in unison, and the rainbow light burst out of the heart mirror to envelop their bodies. In that moment, tiaras, earrings, and heart-shaped wings appeared to complete their Super Silhouettes.

Afterwards, a road made of shining flowers extended from the Heartcatch Mirage in Dune’s direction.

The Super Precures began to slide down the path towards Dune, reciting:

“Flowers, bloom! Precure! Heartcatch Orchestra!”

Holy light emanated from their Tacts and Tambourines, wrapping Dune entirely.

Dune was writhing in agony, but suddenly, the flames of hatred flared up in his eyes.

“Uwoooooohh!”

As he roared like a beast, dark energy erupted from his body, repelling the holy light.

“The Heartcatch Orchestra... didn’t work?!”

The Precures looked at him in astonishment.

In the meantime, the dark energy surrounding Dune kept growing larger and larger, emitting a dusky glow.

“W-What’s happening...?!” Cure Marine mumbled, when they heard Dune’s laughter from beyond the still expanding dark radiance.

“Kukukuku...”

In the next moment, a horrendous howl resounded, and the dark energy seemed to explode with a ‘bang!’

In its place, there stood Dune in the form of a monstrous devil, sporting a long tail and bat-like wings.

“Commendable, Precures. But that technique will not work here, unfortunately.” The Precures were at a loss for words seeing what a monster he transformed into. “My hatred will never disappear. It will continue to grow and destroy everything, and will not stop until all has been taken away. Let me teach you that the ‘love’ you speak of so fondly is nothing more than a speck of dust to be swept away by my hatred!”

Letting out another roar, an eerie purple mist oozed out from under Dune’s feet, as his body continued to grow even larger.

As if it were a huge belt, the mist extended, wrapping itself around the Earth in the blink of an eye. The floating pieces of soil around the Great Heart Tree began to crumble as the dark energy continued to emanate from the mist.

Kaoruko and Coupe had moved over to where the Great Heart Tree was, and thanks to the barrier set up by Coupe, they were safe from the impact of the evil force.

“Girls, over here!”

Once they heard Kaoruko, the Precures hurried inside Coupe’s barrier.

They watched as all remaining earth chunks disappeared, but Dune still didn’t stop growing beyond the ominous mist.

“Is that Dune’s true form?” Cure Blossom asked. Kaoruko replied:



“When I fought him, he looked at least human.”

“That form is more like the pitiful Dune, who sold his soul to the devil and had his body taken over by him,” Cure Moonlight remarked.

In the meantime, Dune had grown to about half the size of the Earth, where he finally stopped growing.

“So that’s the magnitude of Dune’s hatred come to life...” Cure Sunshine mumbled with pity in her voice.

At that moment, Cure Marine flashed a grin:

“But it’s not infinite, right?” They all turned towards her. “We still haven’t used our infinite Precure powers yet, so we still stand a chance!”

Smiles appeared on everyone’s faces.

Hearing such motivating words from Marine gave the girls back their fighting spirit.

Dune threw the first punch to the surface of the ashened Earth. There was no doubt that this impact made the people still there, waiting for the Precures to prevail, terrified.

“We cannot let him do as he pleases with our Earth anymore!” Cure Moonlight said, with Cure Marine adding:

“Well then, we’ll just go save it and be right back!”

“Right!” Cure Blossom and Cure Sunshine replied with a smile.

The Precures turned to Kaoruko and Coupe.

“We’ll be off now!” And with that, they left the barrier with their fairies.

“We are counting on you!”

With Kaoruko’s words in their ears, the Precures launched themselves at Dune.

As of now, they probably didn’t look more than grains of rice to Dune, however, he still seemed to notice their presence, thanks to the accompanying holy light. He turned around, suspending the assault on the Earth.

Dune bombarded the feeble light spots with dark energy bullets. However, the Precures in their Super Silhouette forms eluded them one by one, then came into a stop before him.

Cure Blossom's face reflected nothing but kindness as she spoke:

"Dune... The reason why your sadness won't end is because we are not strong enough. The reason why your hatred won't cease is because our love is still not enough. Which is why... Which is why..."

When her words were swallowed by emotion, Cure Moonlight continued for her:

"Which is why we shall combine our powers now."

She held out her right hand in front of Blossom.

Blossom nodded as she placed her hand above Moonlight's.

"Let me join too!"

"And me."

"And Coffret!"

"And Chypre!"

"Potpourri too!"

"Everyone is joining in~!"

In the moment the hands of the four Precures and the three fairies came into contact and their hearts became one, the Heartcatch Mirage appeared above them, and its mirror began to shine.

"The grand flower blooming throughout the universe!" they called out together, and the radiance of the Heartcatch Mirage grew even brighter, until the holy light surrounded all of them.

The light became more and more brilliant, continuing to expand. Once it has reached a size comparable to Dune's, it disappeared, revealing a pure maiden clad in all-white. She spoke in a clear voice:

"The starry-eyed Precure holding infinite power and infinite love... Heartcatch Precure! Infinity Silhouette!"

Her face resembled Tsubomi's and Itsuki's, her hair was slightly wavy like Erika's, and its colour was the same as Yuri's. The fairies transformed to form the cloak around her shoulders.

Filled with hatred, Dune tried to hit her, but her holy power deflected his fist.

“Hatred brings you nothing but pain,” the maiden said quietly.

Yet, it fell on deaf ears, as Dune continued to strike her again and again, only to be repelled every time.

Then, his expression began to distort. As his eyes opened wide, the hatred that has been filling them previously was being replaced by fear. The pure maiden's serene gaze, with which she was looking at Dune, reflected nothing but kindness. Trembling with fear, Dune took a few steps back.

As the maiden approached calmly, she spoke:

“The power of hatred shall be reduced to nothing before Infinity Silhouette. Your sadness and hatred shall be embraced and purified by the love of the Precures.”

“N-No... Stay away!”

Dune was trying to get away, but the maiden locked him in her embrace without hesitation.

The devil that was possessing Dune let out a final cry of agony, and in that moment, the dark energy left his body without a trace.

From a devil, Dune changed back to his original form of a young man.

His expression softened in the girl's arms. A memory of himself being held by his mother when he was still a child resurfaced in his mind.

From a young man, Dune turned back into a little boy.

“S-So this is... the love of the Precures... I have lost,” he said under his breath with a smile, as his body disintegrated into golden particles, all to be scattered away in the air.

The pure maiden watched his departure with a serene smile, before turning into holy light herself, and was sucked back into the mirror of the Heartcatch Mirage.

Correspondingly, the Super Precures and their fairies re-emerged.

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Yuri, Tsubomi, Erika, Itsuki, Kaoruko, Coupe, and the fairies were standing before the withered Heart Tree with beaming smiles.

“Coupe, the Heart Pot, please,” Kaoruko said, and Coupe sank his paw inside the heart mark on his chest to pull out the Heart Pot. “Now the lid, Yuri-chan.”

“Yes.”

Yuri handed Kaoruko the lid of the Heart Pot she used for transforming. Kaoruko put it on the Heart Pot, then offered it for the Great Heart Tree, placing it by the roots.

A moment later, the Heart Pot started to shine, forming a rainbow of seven colours, which slowly began to inch towards the Great Heart Tree. Once the rainbow reached the dead trunk, the Great Heart Tree began to be filled with life again.

Along with it, a tiny lavender ball of light flew out from the trunk.

“Cologne...!” Yuri uttered, to which the little light cheerfully flew around the group.

The Tree soon filled with verdant leaves, then buds sprouted, the buds grew, finally blooming into flowers, until the entire Tree was covered by their countless numbers.

The Great Heart Tree coming back to life so majestically was a deeply moving sight to witness.

Suddenly, a soft breeze rustled the branches, sweeping several flower petals towards the Earth below.

As the petals of the Great Heart Tree piled up on the deserted lands, the sand began to clear up, and the Desert Devils that have stopped moving after Dune was purified followed their master in his fate.

As the petals brushed against the crystals that were still there after the desert vanished, holy light could be seen, and the people trapped inside regained their original sizes, their Heart Flowers returning inside their bodies.

And thus, the Earth and humanity were restored, all thanks to the Precures' efforts.

With their Precure mission having come to an end, Coupe took the girls to the Precure Palace, where they put back the Heartcatch Mirage to its place.

After a proud glance upon their Precure statues inside the Palace garden, the girls said goodbye to the fairies, guardians of the Great Heart Tree, and returned to their everyday lives on the newly revived Earth.

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Two springs have passed since the Precures purified Dune and saved the Earth.

Tsukikage Yuri and her mother, Haruna, came to Hideaki's hometown in Yamanashi prefecture to visit his grave.

They put flowers and incense sticks on his family grave, and put their hands together in prayer.

Yuri told him that she had been accepted to his old university in Kyoto this spring, and that she was going to follow in his footsteps to become a botanist. Although there was no way for his remains to be placed in the grave, she still managed to bury his lab coat she had found in his locker at the Botanical Garden.

Right after they defeated Dune, Yuri told the truth to her mother, who was now praying next to her, taking her time. How she was a Precure, how Hideaki had joined the Desert Apostles as Professor Sabaaku, how she had a younger sister called Dark Precure, and last but not least, how Hideaki was gruesomely killed while protecting her and Tsubomi.

Haruna took it all in. She had probably been prepared already. Without saying anything about Hideaki, without shedding a single tear, all she said was:

"I'm glad you made it back safely."

Needless to say, Yuri couldn't hold back her tears at her mother's thoughtful gesture.

When she got accepted to university, Yuri wanted her to come with her to Kyoto, but her mother simply shook her head wordlessly.

It went without saying that she couldn't stay any longer at the Botanical Garden's employee residence now that Hideaki was dead, so Yuri asked her to come with her to Kyoto once more.

“Well, Director Hanasaki said that you will join the Botanical Garden as a researcher after finishing university anyway, so there was no need for me to move. I humbly accepted her offer,” she said, giggling like a schoolgirl, so Yuri stopped pressing her further.

She knew her mother; she wouldn’t want her daughter to see her cry whenever she thought about her father while living under the same roof.

While Yuri was reminiscing, Haruna finally finished her prayer.

“You took pretty long, what did you ask from him?”

“I asked your father to keep you safe from bad company even when you’ll be in Kyoto,” she said with a smile, then linked her arm into Yuri’s, and stepped away from the grave.

As they walked out of the main gate of the temple that was located half-way down a hill, a gasp of admiration left their mouth.

A stunning panorama of the Kofu Basin spread out before their eyes, with a direct view to Mount Fuji, still covered in snow.

However, it wasn’t Japan’s highest mountain that left them so breathless. It was the various shades of pink and white flowers blooming across the slopes of the mountains surrounding the Basin, as if covered by a blanket. Cherry, peach, pear blossoms, if they wanted to guess.

As she was gazing at the flower display, Yuri thought about Tsubomi, Erika and Itsuki.

From April, the three of them will become high schoolers at the Myoudou Academy. The high school branch didn’t have a fashion club, so the girls were all excited to create one. Even more surprising was that Itsuki has started modelling for a fashion magazine. She was chosen to be the magazine’s in-house model instead of Erika’s older sister, Momoka, who would go on to pursue professional modelling at the international scale in Paris after graduating from high school. Itsuki said it will be hard to synchronise it with her martial arts practice at the start, but knowing her, Yuri knew she would make it work.

Erika became her mother’s right-hand man, and began to design her own clothes at Fairy Drop.

Tsubomi figured that if she wanted to go to space, she would have to get a job at NASA in the United States, so not only did she begin to focus on her English studies, she even started to ride roller coasters in the amusement park in her freetime to overcome her fear of heights, apparently.

*I can’t be left behind either.*

Her heart filled with the short but wonderful memories spent with the girls during their time as Precures, Yuri made a promise to these blooming flowers that she too, will work hard to achieve her dreams.

END